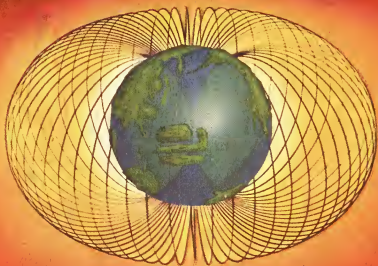


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VOLUME 20
NUMBER 9

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EXTRAVAGANT FICTION TODAY COLD FACT TOMORROW

DECEMBER, 1946

VOLUME 20

NUMBER 9

All **FEATURES** *Complete*

THE OBSERVATORY	by The Editor	6
WIRELESS TO THE HEART	by Roy Candless	35
EXPLORERS OF THE STARS	by P. S. Whitehead	63
MADMAN'S PROPHECY	by William R. Montgomery	63
SPIDER SAFETY	by R. Roberts	135
IRELAND AND ARAN; LINKS WITH ATLANTIS	by H. C. Goble	146
SCIENTIFIC MYSTERIES	by L. Taylor Hansen	148
EGYPTIANS STEAL FIRST ON TROJAN HORSE	by Henry Viertelmaier	151
WHAT MAN CAN IMAGINE	by Bernice J. Peterson and H. C. Goble	152
THE SHAVER MYSTERY	by The Editor	154
INSIDE MOUNT LASSEN	by Ralph B. Fields	155
AMERICA'S MYSTERIOUS RACE OF INDIAN GIANTS	by Rev. Chief Sequoyah	157
TRAPPED SUNSHINE	by June Lurie	160
DISCUSSIONS	by The Readers	162

Front cover painting by Bob Hilbreth illustrating a scene from "The Land of Kai"

AMAZING
STORIES
★
DECEMBER
1946

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Volume 20
Number 9

The OBSERVATORY

..... by the Editor

IT IS unfortunate that Leroy Verza could not have lived to see the publication of his short novel "Double For Destiny" because we know he was proud of it—and justly so. This 42,000-word story was turned out of Leroy's typewriter at white heat and was what he termed "complete inspiration". We think you'll enjoy the unique ideas contained in this story, and you'll thrill to every word of its amazing development. It's a crackerjack story, and certainly in line with the things we've been whacking at you with every issue lately. And by the way, thanks for telling us that we've been hitting the hall with classic-type material every month. It's what we predicted we'd do when the war was over. And we can hardly sit still and wait for each publication date in anticipation of the fine things scheduled for continued attacks on the glory of the past. (To better the record, that is.)

"THE Land of Kul" is our latest offering from the typewriter of Richard S. Shaver (whose historical fiction in our companion magazine, *Mammoth Adventure*, is rapidly causing a new sensation) and it is based, as many of you will recognize, on the books of James Churchward. We think this is a fine piece of science fiction based on fact, and we think you'll detect something else in it too—the weird interplay of Mr. Shaver's now world-famous "Shaver Mystery". More and more we are startled to find out how much scientific basis there is behind his claims. Churchward may have been no white in the eyes of his colleagues, but at least recent attempts to discredit him have only served to strengthen the convictions of his following. It is a good adage to follow to have something to offer in the stead of the things you would seek to explain away.

DON Wilcox offers us one of his little gems of originality in an old theme in his "Great Gods And Little Termites". This is not the first time we've gone down into the world of the Termites, but this is the first time the idea has been developed so originally. You'll like the Wilcox touch in our pages again, we predict.

ROSS Rocklynne presents—why hello, you son-of-a-gun, you!—"Giant Of Ganymede". Yep,

Ross is back on the contents page again. It's been years, and we know you'll enjoy reading him again. As usual, it's Rocklynne excellence!

"DEATH Sentence" by Chester S. Geier ought to be a "must" with you. In fact, Geier should be a must any time! There's one lad we've watched from his very first attempt—and there've been a lot of them!—and there's one lad who'll be turning out fine stories till . . . well why freeze that over again?

LEE Francis, another one of our proteges, clicks again with "Sentimental Monster". It's about a robot named Knowit who hauls books off library shelves. Handy gadget to have around—but it seems he is "sentimental" . . . even to the point of murder! You'll find this story frosting your eyeballs with horror—and interest! Don't miss it!

ORIGINALLY, though, we had planned to run "I Have Been In The Caves", Margaret Rogers' true story of her adventures among the "tero", but again, we ran out of space and the deadline. So it will be in the next issue. This one you should not miss if you are a devotee of the Shaver Mystery—and that puts you in the hundred-thousand class!—because it confirms (oops, agrees) with Shaver. You can judge for yourself if it confirms. There are items in it that make your editor look upon it very favorably. One thing we know—Mrs. Rogers is not perpetrating a hoax. Her story is 100% sincere.

DUE to the terrific favorable response to our feature articles and short fillers, we are making all efforts to get you the best and most intriguing. You'll find this issue jammed with them, and to tell the truth, your editor has become so interested in the unusual things being submitted to these departments that he looks forward to the morning mail with great eagerness. This is a strange world, indeed, and so many strange things are going on! You can read all about the weirdest of them in **AMAZING STORIES**. You'll be gasping like a fish at the articles we intend to present in the coming months. They'll make you wonder—and think! Roy.



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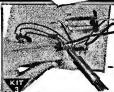
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The LAND of KUI

by RICHARD S. SHAVER

Back from their long absence among the stars came the Elders of the human race—to destroy a continent gone evil.



The young emperor lolled on the throne, amusing himself with the court beauties who danced for him

THE Nor-Princess Vanue reclined in all the ensorceling magnificence of her vital beauty. Her hair was a great air-borne golden cloud holding prisoner the light beams, holding them there adream in beauty. Her flesh was now rosy, now golden little shadows from the captive light in her hair—now palest magic of moonshine, now ivory pillars of strength fallen for a moment into rest, to dream. Her eyes, shooting out bright blue gleams above the whole immortal wonder of her, were blue bearers of the wisdom of the beauty of life that was hers.

Mutan Mjon, watching and fallen adreaming, too, felt again the insupportable longing of love that such beings do inevitably inspire in lesser breasts. And as he watched, Vanue talked, her slow sweet toned words dropping like struck notes from some too-vibrant harp. Her voice was both a music and a meaning, an infinitely lovely poem of sound, with mind-heard overtones of subtle thought vibrating around the word sounds. For such is life growth, all those qualities which are the cultured adults are in an immortal multiplied to an infinite, to an nth degree, and Vanue was the product of an immortal culture—an adult immortal.

"My Mutan, in your days in Atlantis schools, before the migration, heard you ever of the land of Kui?"

"Lady Vanue, I was not an over-bright student, in those days. Something I have heard of such a land; but I remember little except that it sank after certain evil deeds and a desperate war."

"I have seen records of the events leading up to the cataclysm, salvaged by some intrepid agent of the superior powers from the very sea's roaring throat, as it engulfed all Kui."

"It was a great continent, the first

part of Mother Mu to be settled by the Titans. The greatest city on all that planet, now called Earth, was the city of Ra-Mu."

A wondrous place it was, Ra-Mu, of deep, deep caverns, vaster by far than those built by the smaller sons of the later colonists. It was deeper within the earth's diamantine under-rock where the very soul of the planet lies asleep. But hold, I am *telling* you—when I might be *showing* you those very old records."

And Vanue's great hand, which was swift and light as a sea-bird for all its size, reached for a bronze wand and tapped with it a silver bell that hung from the pillar of twining gold-scaled snakes beside her couch. And one of the floating-haired young Nor witch-maids, who are ever in attendance upon her for very love of her, came on quick, silkenly sliding feet upon the glittering floor—that floor which mirrored every movement many ways—and stood before Vanue. Her face was gratitude, an earnest hope that this call from her loved Vanue would result in an opportunity for her to return to Vanue some part of the value she daily received from Vanue's largesse.

"Bring those old Kui records for the Lord Mutan. He has never seen them, and I would like to look at them myself again. They are the only actual history extant of a terrible deed by the greatest villain that poor globe ever bore."

SOON the mysterious vapors of the thought cloud swirled within the prisoning globular force fields, and within the fluorescing vapors the images and happenings of another time and place were real again before us.

As the beloved Vanue rose on one arm to watch the better, all the unbearable vital energy that coruscated in her visible aura moved too, in a flashing inter-

play of a myriad colors, and Mion was torn between watching her, who was his Goddess, and this mighty tale that began to unfold in the mystery of the thought records projected in the cloud.

Now Mutan Mion lost his self, and became only an all-seeing eye within the time and place called the ancient Land of Kui. It was that time when our world was young and the sun was wholly beneficent and no thing aged or died on all the planet Mu.

Within the record projection in the midst of the thought cloud lay a great continent—a vast green jewel set in the blue water. The eye swept swiftly down as a plunging ship from out of the ether of space might plunge. And the great jewel upon the round cloud-hung globe that was Mu became swiftly greater, spreading outward, until below was only the tall glittering towers, the park-like treed spaces of the culture forests and the rolling vehicles and darting planes of a metropolis.

The eye of view swept on down like an alighting plane and entered at last one of the tall towers. Still down and down it swept and the floors of the towers swept past as if made of glass to the penetrative vision of the recording mech. Still down and down, and now the eye was far underground and ever about the speeding eye passed the endless tiered borings of the Titans who had built this cavern city and towered surface openings—the City of Ra-Mu, the crown jewel of all the Land of Kui.¹

Now at last the eye of view came to rest, an omniscient spirit within a great and richly opulent chamber. About were the vast but lively bodies and laughing faces of the huge young Titan nobles of Ra-Mu. For this was the center chamber of the great suite of cavern halls and chambers that were the private possession of Salund Mar. And

Salund Mar was the second son of the ruler of Ra-Mu, and through the Elders of Ra-Mu his father was ruler of all Kui.

Finally the eye of view rested upon the princely person about whom the festivities revolved. Huge he was, but young, and with the spoiled face of inherited beauty that has been overlaid with the willful pride of a soured soul—with the subtle signs of the disaffection called Der.

His robe of blue velvet, worked over with great golden hawks astoop upon fleeing herons trailing their white tailed feathers, was flung open at his hairy throat's base; where the massive muscles swelled now with mocking laughter.

BESIDE him sat his counterpart in physique and appearance, in coloring as florid, in mien as noble—the same curled black hair, the same strong thewed limbs carelessly thrust out and the same great white teeth aflash with

¹ Source of "Land of Kui"—quoted from "The Lost Continent of Mu," by James Churchward. Page 81—"Temple situated at Uxmal, Yucatan" and has been named by Le Plongeon "The Temple of Sacred Mysteries." On its walls an important inscription reads: "This edifice is a commemorative monument dedicated to the memory of Mu, the Lands of the West—That Land of Kui, the birthplace of our sacred mysteries."

On Page 78—"That Land of Kui" means the land of departed souls. The Egyptian Ka comes out of the Maya Kui.

Later, quoting Sir Gardner Wilkinson, the great Egyptologist, Churchward says: "Kui-Land, or The Land of Kui, according to the Maya language, was the birthplace of the Goddess Maya—the mother of Gods and of Man."

The temple faces west, and it is characteristically Churchward's contention that the Land of Mu, which I (Shaver) contend, was the name for the whole globe, and that Churchward was talking about The Land of Kui and it did lie in the Pacific. Churchward seems to think Mu and Kui are one and the same.

The South Sea Islands and other lands of the South Pacific are considered to be the remains of this sunken continent—the peaks—and the Polynesian survivors of the ancient civilization in Kui-Land.—Author.

laughter. But there was a difference, a subtle all important difference, and the friends of the older brother, Clotilde, while not as numerous, were far more steadfast and better reputed than the friends of the younger Salund Mar. Clotilde wore a sober black doublet, slashed with cloth of gold at hip and shoulder, and about his strong throat a gold chain, his only ornament. But the clothing of Salund Mar was set with great rubies—his hair sprinkled with gold dust and the dagger at his waist was set with jewels worth his own ransom.

This soberly clad and more meditative of these two brothers was Clotilde, eldest son of the ruler and heir apparent to the throne of Clotilde III, upon the elevation of his father to the greater planets. This event was ordained for the first day of the New Year, and that day was one month away.

Now the omniscient eye of the auto-spy-ray that had been sent there by none knows what method or by whom, swept nearer to the great black curled head of Salund Mar and went within to explore the inner nature of the man. And his thoughts became things within the thought cloud's projection.

Within his mind was again the whole Land of Kui, and crowning the great continent of Kui was the city of Ra-Mu and beautiful it was and rich and mighty within Salund Mar's brain. But crowning it all was the person of Salund Mar and that was the most wonderful thing of all in the mind. And within his mind his spirit moved, coiled, plotted and stunk like a slimy and poisonous snake, and made his face to smile and his mouth to say sweet words.

"Speak, my Clotilde, and tell me what will you do first when you are the ruler of all this mighty land of Kui?"

THE now serious face of Clotilde turned upon his brother and looked at him, puzzled. And then he answered, after a time of deep thought upon his answer.

"Why, first I shall ask all the classes, all the forms of life and all the various unions of workmen and like organizations for complaints. And then I shall spend my first years of office righting and satisfying every complaint. I shall not be as long as my father in winning my elevation to Hevi Enn and its more satisfying life."

"You are right, my brother. The great Elder race will reward you for your efforts, I am sure." But a careful listener would have read in Salund's voice that he had little faith in the wisdom of the Elder race or in the value of their rewards. And it is so with those that cannot comprehend greatness, trust or honesty, or believe in any noble thing. For Salund was dero, and such were few in the Land of Kui, and so it was that his disaffection escaped notice, detention and treatment, was ignored by all.

And the young Titan, Clotilde, gazed long and dreamily at the eyes of the young girl Cilnor upon a scarlet couch across the chamber where she lay and dropped grapes into her open, laughing mouth, and talked with the maidens about her. And he did not fail to see the cunningly contrived ring on his brother's finger that was shaped like a snake, did not fail to see it open its jaws where the great head of the snake mounted the two diamond eyes, did not fail to see the shimmer of the droplet of death. But it was so vague a sight that the eyes of Clotilde knew that it was but the shimmering of the lights that shone in the depths of the stones that were the evil eyes of the snake of the ring.

For the young Clotilde's great spirit

was adream with the tales of the wonders and pleasures of the Elder planets where he would some day win an entrance by wise and careful work. But the spirit of Salund Mar was as the snake of the ring on his hand, dripping slow death upon the best of life.

Clotilde was thinking that it was not quite fair in some ways that the son of a ruler had such a great chance to win the elevation to Hevi Enn more quickly than a lowlier person. For though Clotilde knew that he, too, would be a lowly person when he did arrive at Hevi Enn some time in the future, he knew too that he would be much better off than here as the ruler of all Kui. And was not his father being elevated in just one month to prove to him that it was a better thing? And would not the king of a savage tribe of the uncivilized jungles be better off as a citizen of Ra-Mu than as a king in his village? Proof enough, indeed! But the eyes of Salund, upon his brother's face in silent exultation that at last the poison had been administered, knew that such things were lies. But they were not lies, unfortunately for Salund. The poison was a slow one, and Clotilde died, one week later.

CHAPTER II

STILL and white and noble lay Clotilde in his coffin, in scarlet clothes that had been prepared for the ceremony of ascending the throne of all Kui-Land. And the rosy cross blazed upon his breast, and the eyes of all those who swore by the Rose Cross in that room blazed with a similar fire, and that fire boded ill for the one who had done this thing.

Black were the lilies banked about the great coffin, and black were the horses that champed outside to bear

his young body to its place in the great tomb. And sad were the cries of the young girls, for Clotilde had been greatly admired by all, and such capture the hearts of the young.

Death was almost unknown to the people of Kui, and murder was but a word they had read or heard somewhere. They could not fully grasp the enormity of the thing that had happened. Grasping it with their minds, they still could not conceive who might have done this thing here in Ra-Mu, where evil had no home.

Schooled and cool was the mind of Salund Mar, as he paced sorrowfully up the aisle of the church of the Elder One. Sad was his face, sober his bearing. But deep within the breast that sparkled with the dark blue gems set into the heavy fabric of metal-cloth, boiled an exultation. And the hand that rested on the jeweled dagger hilt was clenched, though his firm hand-grip to his friends told them without words that they shook hands with the coming ruler in sorrowing friendship only.

Pitiful was the white face of Cilnor, the maid who had been chosen by Clotilde and had promised herself to him. Like a flower whose stalk has been cut, she wilted visibly before them as they bowed their heads in the endless ceremonies of the Death of the Flaming Cross. And as the white robed priests swung their censers and chanted the last chant for the soul of young Clotilde, she ran sobbing from the chamber of death.

For three days she wept in her own quarters, and in the end they bore her away, not dead, but better so. Her mind had given way, and she saw constant visions of great hawks diving deathward on a heron, and the heron her brother. And the vision would not stop, but kept screaming from her

mouth to save the heron her brother. And many murmured at this vision, for it seemed the work of Mother Mu, the spirit that watches over all the better people of earth—the inner soul of the planet. But they placed her in the doctor's hands.

CAME the day of Clotilde the Elder's ascension to the first planet of the God Schools—Hevi Enn. And came the same day the installation of Salund Mar as the ruler of all Kui-Land.

The chief of the Elders sent from the far planet Hevi Enn was called Konro Loral, and he was of great wisdom.

These dozen mighty Titan Elders from far Hevi Enn had journeyed all that fearful distance through the star ways for no purpose but to officiate at the elevation of Clotilde the Elder to the greater planets, and to test the young Salund Mar for his fitness to assume office. And they worked all day after their arrival, preparing certain great machines of extreme delicacy for the testing of the mind of Salund Mar, for to put a whole nation into the hands of one young man is a serious matter.

The omniscient eye of the subtle spy-ray watched all their labors with interest, and Mutan and Vanue wondered who that spy who had brought the recording ray mech might be, and how daring and skilful to do what he had done without detection or hindrance. And they watched with open eyes, for such work was old. Since the time of early Mu much had changed with the passage of time, and many things had been forgotten.

Then into the quiet laboratory where they labored with their huge hands, taking all the delicate apparatus apart for examination and replacing, oiling and putting in new parts—into that place of quiet concentration of thought—came a great rushing of winds and a

roar. And Konro Loral straightened his back and looked at his other Elder friends from afar, for that noise betokened the departure of the ship in which they had come, and with it went Clotilde, and the ceremony of his elevation must be over and how could that be, for they must be present to make it officially proper? And even as their large grave eyes questioned each other, came a page-boy in his bright red doublet and striped hose, and whispered into Konro Loral's ear. And Konroe cursed a great God's oath and his face became fierce as a force-storm in dark space.

"Friends, the high priest of Ra-Mu, the shepherd of all the children of the Rose Cross, lies murdered in his cell—a knife in his back. And some ignorant oaf has officiated in his place who did not even know we had to be present, and has dispatched Clotilde upon his way without our knowing. And our own passage back to our home will now have to wait the coming of the ship from Hevi Enn next year."

"How can this be," asked Bonlor Vit, his hearded face white with strange thoughts. "Murder has not existed on this planet since the rule of the League began."

And as they drew together to discuss this strange event, into the great laboratory where they stood walked a procession of young nobles, fops with curled hair and many rich jewels glittering on their fingers, in their hair and worked into patterns on their clothes. These were the noble youths who formed the circle of friends of the Prince Salund Mar. Their perfumed hair, the twinkling gems starring their clothes, the luxurious, idle superiority of their faces, the curling lips sneering an evil intent on their faces—all these things told Konro Loral that events were getting out of his hands. And they

surrounded the labor-stained and bearded old Titans of wisdom and goodness, with their work-worn clothes and stained hands, their defenseless look of the habitual scholar and peruser of books who neglects the active and warlike side of life. And they mocked the unarmed scholars from far Hevi Enn, saying:

"You are the Elders of Wisdom from afar, but there are many things you do not know today that you should know to stay alive! Tell us, if you are so wise, why do you die today and at whose hands? Mayhap if you are really wise and not old misfit wise-acres whom the Lords of Hevi Enn have sent here to rid themselves of hookish pests, we will let you live. We do not believe in you or your wisdom or the mysterious powers that are said to protect you."

THE form of the mighty Konro Loral towered, and awe struck fear into the young fops, for Konro was twice the size of any of them. He looked at the arrogant young men with luxury and idleness, writing large and evil messages across their young faces' smoothness, and he said:

"You are the friends and supporters of the evil Salund Mar, and you have come to slay me so that his murder of the young Clotilde may go unseen and unknown forever. But you will fail, for, foreseeing the turn of events, I have sent a message with the ship that has left hearing the Elder Clotilde to the far, terrible might of the just and wise rulers of Hevi Enn, and of many another planet including this one, which is only a child among their other children. They will know all that has happened. Their ways of knowing such things are somewhat numerous, and even if my message, and the fact that I am missing from the ship which was

supposed to return me to my home will not tell them what has happened, it is not true they will not learn of this.

"There are other watchers, other messengers, and the tale will get through if my own letter does not. They will know all that has happened. It were wiser for you to give yourselves into my keeping, but you are unwise and foolish men who have failed to study in your schools. Your minds will never see the true way of life, and so I must die, which I foresaw long ago on Hevi Enn when I heard of young Clotilde's death which had no apparent cause. There was but one in all Kui with a motive to kill him, and that one was Salund Mar."

And the young men murmured to each other, seeing that Konro Loral was truly wise and no fool and that their deeds would not go unknown of all as Salund had assured them. But their fears of the great powers that were represented by the Elder Konro were so great that they decided to kill him anyway, to put off the final day of retribution. Principally they decided this because they believed in the careless and loving kindness of the good-natured Gods whom they had been taught to adore. They were sure that even if caught, their punishment would be light.

But Salund Mar came in, a great figure in a flame-colored cloak, belted about the waist with the forbidden dishulh pistols and a flame sword of the illegal charge. On Salund's flushed face was the fierce urgency of events that moved too fast for him. For he had listened from the distance to the thoughts of his nobles over his own telaug heams and knew they were not deeply enough embroiled as yet and might withdraw at any time. And he pulled a dishulh from his belt and pointed it at Konro saying:

"Make your peace with whatever you may believe to be the Gods of Death!"

AND that majestic working man, Konro the wise Elder from Hevi Enn, spoke, answering:

"There are no Gods in the Land of Death; but only a new beginning as a tiny seed and all to do again. There is only nothingness for an age in the Land of Death. You should not play with your own chances of going there by these deeds of yours."

And young Salund sneered, his lips curling luxuriously over his great white teeth, and the will to kill writing a terrible message of madness across the young spoiled face.

"Then may your Gods of Nothingness accept your deed, and maybe your soul, if you have any, though how even a soul could live through this . . ." and he discharged the dis-bulb into each of the Titan Elders' immortal and sacred bodies, bodies that had survived an eon of warfare and striving, to be betrayed in the end by a youth with not a tenth of their ability. Those immortal bodies dissolved in the pale flames of atomic fire.² The room reeked with the burning. Young Sleer Kopt, son of a noble of the court and Lord of the Province Koptland on the rim of Kui, laughed with the thrill of such sudden and decisive events, and opened the windows upon the great rocky airshafts and set the pumps going to clear the room of the stinking air.

"These great ones from afar with their feeble will to rule us whether we will or not, they do stink like any common cattle when they cook!" he said laughing and the company of young Lords all laughed too, feeling most adventurous and able to have disposed of this powerful group of men who represented the might of the League of the Rose Cross over the little world on

which Kui-Land was the greatest in strength. And in their minds they all decided that they did not need to be elevated to the planet Hevi Enn. For the ease of doing such things assured them they could build and would build a life for themselves as great as the good life of the far place which they had been taught to reverence and desire. And they ceased to reverence or fear the Elder Planets and their agents from then on.

So it was that young Salund, clothed all over in tight fitting cloth-of-gold, embroidered with great scarlet flamingoes with glittering eyes of sapphire, and sewn over with the green pearls of smoky beauty from the fearful deeps off Sair, and sprinkled over the hair, curled and black, with gold dust, and glittering all over like a candelabra, took his place upon the throne that had been his father's and should now have been his dead brother's.

And his full lips sucked in the taste of power over forbidden delights, power over life and death; and the serving girls, who had before been free, safe

² Immortal, meaning the ability to live forever, in the sense that "forever" is a definite length of time. To those of you who object to the apparent confusion of terms in the "death" of an "immortal," it should be borne in mind that "immortality" in the body, so sought after by mystics and alchemists in all ages, is a thing based on molecular structure, and not on atomic. Although we may attain a molecular balance to the body which permits a constant and efficient renewal of that body so that it goes on existing without deterioration, we are still confronted with the truth that this balance may be interfered with or totally destroyed. In that sense there is no such thing as "immortality." But that space is inhabited by a race of Men who are immortal is an unshakable truth in the concept of molecular structure, which Men may be and are killed as Salund Mar has killed them.

We may conjecture as to "immortality" of the "soul" as something atomic, or sub-atomic, rather than molecular, and thereby glimpse what may be another and greater truth of the continuity of identity, in which true "immortality" exists. Not even an atom bomb could destroy such "immortality."—Ed.

and with the common rights of all citizens, now cowered at his feet like slaves with fear, for they knew his temper and were afraid.

FROM the city of Ra-Mu an exodus of those who feared the mad young Salund Mar began. Many and great were the names of those who fled through the vast round tubes, wide as rivers and as level as unstirred water, that were the ways of the city of Ra-Mu. But the rolling caravans of merchant princes, of nobles who had in past time ran afoul of the uncertain temper of Salund, of the leaders of the unions of workers, and of all the life in the city with the wisdom to foresee what was going to happen under the hand of Salund Mar were met outside the hearing of the city by soldiers. Their massive war-tank spouted fire from the many snouts of the terrible ray-cannon-mech of the science of Kui, and the swift killing rays of such range that none other could reach far enough to defend against swept the caravans of all life. And the greater part of those who fled Ra-Mu failed to live to carry the news of his deeds to the rest of the Land of Kui. And their goods went into the private coffers of Salund Mar, and their great dwelling caverns with the rich furnishings of the merchants fell to the ownership of the young nobles who had abetted Salund.

Within the city's laboratories, places huge as an ordinary city themselves, labored now day and night all the skilled men brought by royal order from all of Kui. And their work was designed to construct an armament that even the war-fleets of the all-powerful, but heretofore peaceful Hevi Enn that were expected from space, would not be able to overcome.

In case all this labor should prove futile, and the wisdom and experience

of the much older men and greater and more able men from Hevi Enn should bring war weapons of more terrible power than anything he might construct, Salund prepared a weapon unknown to any science before. It was a thing so terrible that only his twisted brain could have conceived a use for it.

Deep under the cavern city of Ra-Mu, within the diamantine inner rocks that hold all the upper rock of the upper world in its place, he built a titanic machine of more power than men had ever put in one place before. What it was is this: a thing that affected the tiny magnetic charges that are the binding of all matter's molecules, that do flow about the surface of atoms as water does about earth—but that in this flow do bind them all into one—as mud is bound by water, but separates when dry and becomes dust. So it is with all matter to be held by this fluid stuff into a hard thing that we call rock, or steel, or whatever it may be. This is the powerful magnetic substance that is driven out when iron is heated, and that flows back in when the iron is plunged into cold water. They give temper and hardness by binding the parts of matter more firmly together in the iron. T-ions is what the scientists of Ra-Mu called them, and they are things that can be driven and coerced in many ways. Matter does strange things when these binding magnets are removed, just as water boils and becomes steam when the heat repellant drives out the binding of the T-ions.

JUST as water can become loose and agile and fly off like gas into the air, so can rock become loose and agile under certain rays that drive out this universal binding stuff of matter, and fly into the air as smoke, or flow along like water. And Salund Mar had found in an old book in the belongings of the

murdered Elder technician, Konro Loral, the drawings for a machine to make borings into rock, by the use of a ray of power that would make the rock run like water or disappear entirely as a gas, and leave a tunnel all bored through the rock without labor. And this was a great improvement over the method used now of boring tunnels with a dis-ray, for "dis" was an unpleasant stuff to be around, and gave off lava and fumes and was dangerous to all who handled it in tunnel boring.

This mighty ray-mech Salund did cause to be constructed deep under the very cornerstone of Ra-Mu, in a gigantic form, so huge it was that the machine itself was a quarter as wide as Ra-Mu above. When he turned it on for an instant of testing, it bored a vast hole clear across the under-part of the whole continent called "Kui-Land." Through all the under-rock went the great ray, melting and vaporizing all before it, and some rock flowed like water, down into the great natural caverns that do honeycomb the inner parts of earth—and some turned into a grey, soft gas and was drawn off by the air pumps.

CHAPTER III

NOW were the days of Salund lording it over all the myriads of the people of Kui, and great was the misery.

Now was high revelry in the ancient palace cavern of Ra-Mu. Upon that throne carved of chryso-beryl, in the likeness of two great dragons holding in their claws the seat of power, with the vaulting flames of the Rosy Cross behind it, where wisdom and benevolence had sat for many centuries, sat instead the sprawled, bedecked negligence of Salund Mar. At his feet crouched the prettiest maids of the palace awaiting his pleasure, and they

were nude and ashamed. And about the formerly solemn palace chambers now brawled and tipsled and lechered the young nobles who had followed the lead of Salund in this as in other things. And revolt after revolt flared in the wide flung caverns, and the farmers of the sunbright surface threw down their tools and refused to raise food for such as this monster in the palace. But Salund with a ruthless and bloody hand slew all who opposed him and set others to their tasks.

Then came that day which fear and Salund Mar had awaited hand in hand. This was the day of the coming of justice from far off Hevi Enn, to see to the stewardship of the usurper Salund Mar, for the planet was in truth but a lesser fief of theirs. High overhead was seen at last the flaming symbol of the Rose Cross of the League of the Planets of the Elder Gods, and into the farthest limits of the telescopic eyes of the vision rays could be seen the armada of the space Navy from the dread power of Hevi Enn.

The great space warships of Hevi Enn, some manned with the winged men who are native to that planet, and some manned with the ordinary four limbed men who are those who have been chosen to ascend into that wonderful life, came steadily on, as though all the warriors of all the worlds of space were not enough to stop them or even give them pause. And the ships that Salund had built, and the ships that had been the old navy of Kui, took to the air under that fearful armada impudently, imprudently, and sure that only death could result. For those fearful ships of Hevi Enn were each as large as the whole vast city of Ra-Mu and the imagination could not dare to guess what wonders and terrors they might contain for war.

But Salund was not entirely a fool,

and had found some renegades from the armies of the far planets who had told him what weapons he might expect. And, according to their information, the long needle-like ships of Kui were armed with rays of vast power—a power that was terribly concentrated into a thin path, and the secret of such weapons was that out in space one weapon can reach as far as another, for space offers no obstacle to such passage, and only far vision is needed to make any weapon terrible. And the eyes of his fleet were as good as any eyes, Salund suspected.

SO THE thin, small, fast ships of Kui flashed impudently into the underparts of the vast fleet of Enn, all their rays blazing, and many a winged warrior, and many an ancient bearded and tremendous Elder of Hevi Enn, who had graduated from a dozen planets to reach that famed haven of immortality, died at his vision plate before they fired a shot. And the truth of Salund's audacity was seen; for the people of Hevi Enn and the League of the Rosy Cross had removed the causes of war long ago from their life, thus little improvement had been made in the art of war for centuries, and Salund knew as much about it as they did, for neither knew much. Or so Salund thought during the first few minutes of war which were entirely his way; for one of the mighty warships came blazing down to the globe below by some lucky chance shot, and several veered from their course.

But the truth was otherwise than Salund at first thought. For the might of their strength had given the leader of the fleet from Hevi Enn the idea that even a madman would know better than to fire upon them, and expected only some kind of bluff when the tiny ships took off from the round globe far below. The mercy that was a part of their

hearts made them hold their fire for that split second, which gave the tiny ships with their powerful rays their chance to get in a blow. And that was the end of the space navy of Ra-Mu, for with their minds enraged at the sudden attack without parley or other usual formality, such as prevailed among the cultured men of the League, the fleet of mighty war cruisers flashed now into intricate, unpredictable maneuvers so that no poor faltering human eye from the men who manned Salund's ships, against their better judgment and on pain of death, could follow, and the great rays lashed out simultaneously and down upon their poor heads came all the Hell-fire and God-anger of the power of Hevi Enn. And now a whirlwind of swift destruction, overtook them, and the thousand and more ships, long slim needles of seeming deadly destruction that they were, were within minutes but floating, blazing hulks, riddled fore and aft, and from those blasted wrecks men cried to the God-men of Hevi Enn to release them, or to kill them before the fire burned them alive, but the anger they had aroused left no room for mercy in the great hearts of the Elder warriors.

It was long after when all the wounds of all the Elder men had been attended before the mercy ships of the Rosy Cross flitted from wrecked hulk to burning hull to pick up the survivors and the wounded. For these were rebels, and the hearts of the Elder men had little care for men too stupid to realize that their rule was one of goodness, mercy and wisdom, and not a thing to be rebelled against by any but fools who know not where their best interest lies.

AND in the distances of space, phalanx after phalanx of Salund's needle ships dissolved before the rap-

idly shifting circles, squares and unpredictable formations and courses of the master mariners of Space. Still the great war-dragons of Hevi-Enn sped on deeper into the ever-night of far space in pursuit of the rebel ships that had survived the first shock of battle, and within hours the last of them had flamed into death before their fearful rays, and their anger was appeased.

Now back they came to float once more just out of range of the great space defense rays of the city of Ra-Mu, expecting that if there were sense in this madman, Salund Mar, the white flag of parley would go up from the tall towers of the entries to the underworld city. But no such flag greeted their eyes, and anger again flamed in their breasts, the same anger and hurt that arises in a mother's breast when her own son turns against her and tries to kill her.

And that anger in their breasts became actual force as mighty disintegrating rays reached out from the war-dragons and touched the tops of the towers so that they burned like tall candles in the night that was fallen. And the moon gazed whitely down on that strange and awful scene, and the great trees of the culture gardens wilted and dried and burst into flames from the heat as the tall towers flamed steadily under the dis-rays, and melted and flowed as lava, and the lava flowed into the great shafts that led down to the city—that city that extended in tier after tier from seven miles under the earth to seventy miles within the bowels of Mother Mu, and the lava formed great pools and hardened into plugs that sealed forever the openings into that city.

Now no more could Salund Mar send up his ships even if he had them to send, which he did not. But he could still keep the mighty war fleet at a

distance by the penetrative beams from his fortress city so far within the rock, and he did.

So it was that far off, a hundred miles from the city of Ra-Mu, the fleet landed at last up on the soil of Mu, the tributary planet which they had come to set to rights. And there on the coast of Kul Land great preparations were made to invade the caverns leading to Ra-Mu.

The Elders, from the far world of great weight, built large heavy mechanisms on wheels and began to assemble them in the river-wide tunnels that were the ways leading to the city of the underworld of Kul.

Salund bided his time and waited, and upon his face was defeat and a secret exultation that at the last he was ready to take his would-be conquerors to death with him, as well as all the people of the city who served his will so unwillingly.

AT LAST the invaders were ready, and months had passed, and Salund was ready too. As the terrible armaments of the vast bodied Elders from afar rolled through the under-ways nearer and nearer the city, with their vast fans of defense rays out ahead to block the dis-fire from Salund's army; as the last of them trundled from the surface down into the deeper caverns that led to the heart of Ra-Mu, Salund sighed, for his last card had now to be played.

So, manning its controls himself, and sending the others about up above out of the way, Salund reached out with the great rock-dissolving ray that he had built so much bigger than any man could imagine a use for. On the vision screen of its penetray guide-ray screen, he picked out the advancing war-tanks, the marching troops, the whole vast array of the Elder army advancing from

afar off. He turned on the terrible power, and the vast mechanisms revolved slowly in a great circle, and a pillar of rock about which it revolved was its hitching post and its protection from the falling rocks.

Under the great weight of the far off war-gear trundling slowly toward him Salund shot the terrible rock melting ray, and the floor crasbed through under their weight and dropped them, shouting with death into the gulfs he had bored beneath them. The pillar of rock about which the machine revolved became the pillar of rock upholding the whole rock-warren city of Ra-Mu, for Salund circled and circled, seeking with his vast power-ray each last fleeing enemy tank and troop carrier and tool of war, and boring under it a vast shaft of nothingness into which it fell. And so it was that single-handed Salund Mar set at naught all the war gear and cunning of a nation of men far superior to himself, but it was with the invention of one of their number he did this deed. For this rock melting ray was a thing that Konro Loral had worked on by himself for years. Even so, few knew of it, so that when Salund Mar unleashed its vast rock dissolving power upon them, it was a complete surprise.

SALUND sat upon the seat of the vast machine for a long time, entranced with the awful power of it, as it revolved about and about its great rock pillar that held the weight of rock from which it had burned away all the support. Steadily the terrible rock dissolver took away all the under-rock of the land of Kui, and a vast gulf was formed under the whole land. The eyes of Salund were filled with the madness of power as he watched its terrible work. Of the armies that had entered the ways leading to the city of Ra-Mu there was left no man alive, and nothing

remained of all those great ways and living places but one vast open gulf of darkness, for Salund had allowed the great ray to dissolve it all into the grey drifting smoke that filled the gulf with choking vapor of rock.

Now Salund sent a great telaug beam up to where the vast war-dragons lay along the coast of Kui-Land, and his thought over that telaug beam told the men of Hevi Enn, the crews of the ships and those who were yet left alive, some fraction of those who had come with the great armada:

"Take yourselves back to your holy land in the sky from which you came, for you have found a man of a different nature than those with whom you are used to deal. And if your fleet does not leave my land of Kui at once, I will blast out the rock from under you and drop you alive into Hades."

Sadly the surviving few men of Hevi Enn took themselves into the ships, and silently the fleet lifted into the night skies. Soon there was in space around the globe called "Mu" not one of the ships from far off Hevi Enn.

Salund Mar laughed greatly, got down from his seat upon the mighty machine, and went back up to his palace in Ra-Mu.

The people of the city could not sleep for trembling and thinking of the whole Land of Kui, hanging its vast weight upon that single pillar of rock; for the madness of Salund Mar had hung the life of a nation, the weight of a continent, upon that pillar forever.

No man knew how great was that gulf that the rock-dissolving ray had bored, for no ray vision or telescopic eye could reach the outer ends of that gulf. Some stole silently out of the city, explored the reaches of the gulf, and found no end. For the vast power of that ray had burned away the whole under-rock of a continent, and more

beside. Men cursed Salund Mar for a greater fool than any other that had ever lived, but that did not make them any safer.

At last learning what foolish support their lives had now been hung upon, the whole people of Ra-Mu and of all the Land of Kui tried to leave. But the soldiers who still served Salund Mar upon pain of death would not release the ships, and there was no way they could get away.

NOW as the whole land sat in fear of death, came a single ship over the blasted remnants of the surface towers that marked the city of Ra-Mu, and a message ray came down to them and said:

"Leave this city and this land, for it is doomed and all will die who now live within the Land of Kui."

The ship went away, and all wished they could listen to that messenger from afar, but there was no way to escape this madman of a ruler. The people sent delegations to Salund Mar, and the bearded old men begged him on bended knees to allow them to leave the city. But Salund would not give the leave, and his soldiers guarded still the ways, and the many harbors of the coast were in his hands, and there were no ships. There were few ships of the air or of space left after all the warring. These made steadily trip after trip from the crowded, fear-filled Land of Kui to the other lands of Mu. But all they could take away was but a drop of pity in a sea of vast need.

Life went on, and no more did the ships come from far Hevi Enn to molest Salund Mar, the great fool and terrible ruler, and some who went deep into the place where the great machine still lay as Salund had left it looked and saw that it was truth that the whole weight of the continent of all Kui was sup-

ported by that one great rock pillar of adamantine inner rock which was the place where the great machine sat and around which it revolved at a tethered goat around a post. All wise men knew that sooner or later that pillar of incassate, stubborn immutability must give way under the strain, and the sea crush in upon them all as the land sank. They went up to the city of Ra-Mu and prophesied that the land was doomed and all must flee. Many tried always to flee, but the mad Salund sat upon his throne, and sent soldiers to stop those in flight. Many were killed fleeing, and bloody were the days that passed.

Now one day another small, slim ship arrived from where no man knew, and hung out in the far blue of the daytime sky. A man came and appeared floating down from the far blue, with nothing to uphold him, but still he flew like a bird with no wings. He went into the great underworld of Ra-Mu and no man tried to stop him, for no one cared any more who did what, but only ducked and hid from all the soldiers who served Salund, for they were mad with blood lust, drinking and lechering, and with having everything their own way.

The stranger removed from the palace of Salund Mar a tiny machine and no one who tried to stop him was able.

(Upon the record was seen this man's face and Vanue looked long upon him and Mion thrilled to hear his words, as he told the people of Kui over a broadcast of diffuse beams in all directions that their time had come and they were given one week to find their way from that cursed land or die.)

AGAIN Salund's soldiers stopped all the people who left the city, but by now all the wiser folks had found a way of getting themselves away, or had died

trying.

At the end of one week the tiny slim ship above Kui-Land dropped one little shining sliver of death directly upon the scarred, burned lava pockets that were all that was left of the fair towers of the openings of the cavern city. The bomb exploded with a vast sound, and with the force of that explosion the pillar of rock that held Kui aloft splintered and turned to powder under the terrible weight. The whole continent crashed down and down into the gulf that Salund had created from his madness under the whole land.

The sea rose, then, into terrible, mountain-topping waves as the whole land sank, and rushed crashing and roaring across the whole fair face of the Land of Kui. Afar off on the shores of other lands the seas for a long time beat in waves a mile high, and many were killed over the whole earth. But the might of the great league of the Elders was not questioned again, and no more were the wise agents of the Elders of the Far Planet league killed by any man.

* * *

AND Mion looked at Vanue, where she leaned on one arm still looking at the great sea waves dashing and shaking their mad manes over the sinking Land of Kui, and he marveled at her. Vanue looked up from the spectacle of the death of a continent and of a people, and was pleased that Mion was watching her in preference to the mighty spectacle of the far past. She spoke:

"That was the sinking of the Land of Kui, and the end of the wonderful city of Ra-Mu. Why the Elders of Hevi Enn finally destroyed the place I do not know; perhaps in their reasoning, their prestige demanded they precipitate the fall of the pillar of rock,

since it would fall anyway in time and kill just as many one time as another. Thus their prestige would benefit and a future peril to all be removed, and the devilish fool, Salund Mar, would not live to profit by his murder of their armies. Mayhap the man who ordered the bomb thrown did not know yet, not having read the records, how big was the gulf that Salund Mar had created beneath the continent, nor know at all that Salund had kept his people from leaving. That catastrophe set back all earth's progress for many centuries."

Mutan Mion made no answer, but looked at Vanue's air-borne golden cloud of hair where the light had fallen adream forever, and at her flesh, now rosy-red, now golden little gleams, now silvery shadows of palest moonshine, and at the ivory pillars of strength and beauty that were her limbs, pillars rising now from rest. He looked at her eyes that cast their conquering blue beams upon him, and his heart tried to burst out of its gold trimmed jacket for some reason. Vanue smiled upon him, for she knew him well. Mion got up from the chair of carven ebony, and went out into the night of the cavern city that was Nor, the ever-night of the deep caverns, and he walked a long time through the curious scenes which our tongue has no words to describe. Then he went home to his Arl and her soft arms claimed him.³

³ Perhaps the true origin of this curious tale should be accurately presented to the reader, so that he may ponder upon the significance of what he has read. Richard Shaver, whose amazing "Thought Record" stories we have wondered about, does get these "records" from what your editor cannot but describe as "caves" (since he cannot prove otherwise). As a means of "testing" these records, and also as an exciting experiment aimed at determining just how much of Earth's ancient history might be substantiated from legend into fact by the deliberate invitation of still further of these "thought record" telepathic messages from the ancient "caves," we suggested that

Mr. Shaver write a story of the ancient land of Kuli, as it has been presented in the remarkable books of the late James Churchward but to allow his "cave people" to have a hand in writing it by referring to their ancient records. Scientists have argued that Churchward was a dreamer and that most of his findings do not mean what he says they mean. It should be true, that if these "thought records" have any accuracy, and extend into Earth's past to the very first "Man" to live on this planet, they should substantiate or disprove Churchward's books. Mr. Shaver assented, carefully read the Churchward books which we provided for him, and then sat down to a weird experience in which your editor participated as a curious observer. From somewhere, over that mysterious machine, the telling of the caves, came

pictures (invisible to your editor, of course) into the mind of Mr. Shaver, and rapidly he wrote the story "The Land of Kuli." Afterward, Shaver expressed himself as "greatly pleased about the story for some strange reason." Of the truth of what we relate in this footnote, you may judge for yourself—it could be entirely fiction. If THAT is so, then mental telepathy is NOT A FICTION, or how would you account for the fact your editor KNEW before he read the manuscript, EVERYTHING THAT WAS IN IT? To your editor, it is another mystifying angle to the "Shaver Mystery." Personally, we think this Shaver story is a very long way from pure fiction—and we think we've seen the past of Earth "as through a glass darkly" but nonetheless we have seen it.—Ed.

LEGEND of QUINMAS VALLEY

By REX DU HOWARD

THE storm had become quite bad, and Chatham Sound was no place for small craft such as ours, so we put about and into a nearby harbor. Further cruising into Alaska waters would be held up till the storm abated.

Overlooking the harbor was an Indian village, and having nothing better to do, I took my pencils and sketch book and went ashore to look around. I do a bit of sketching, something I fondly believe to be my artistic talent.

This town was a far cry from the day when the Indians lived in log and shak lodges, to the modern homes I was seeing; and my hopes of seeing a real Indian or hearing any native legends seemed small indeed. However luck was with me in that I found sitting on the front steps of his home a very old man, who when I spoke to him, immediately called to someone inside the house. A young lady came to the door. When I made known my wishes, she, after translating to the old man, readily agreed to tell me all the legends and tales he could recall. While he talked in his oddly drawled, yet smooth dialect, the girl, his great grand-daughter, translated this odd tale:

For several days Nis-We-Bask had been following the banks of a large creek; his friend Kae-lth had decided to return to his canoe at tidewater, thence to his summer camp. But Nis-We-Bask was determined to explore this river as far as possible, now during the low water season, just to see how many beaver colonies and other fur-bearing animals could be located. Kae-lth had suggested, rather apprehensively, that it wasn't safe for one man to venture into unknown territory; in fact even hinted that other creatures other than just wild animals might be found, with unpleasant results. Nis-We-Bask had laughed at his friend's fears; moreover he was young and strong and a good hunter as well as the fact that many other

hunters of their tribe had at different times gone out hunting alone, and with one or two exceptions had always returned. Aside from such wild animals as were usually found in these parts, what was there to be afraid of? Surely not the stories old squaws told their grand-children by the lodge fire; stories of giant men who long ago had paid their tribe a visit and taught the tribe many things now forgotten.

Musing thus, Nis-We-Bask walked silently along, sometimes along animal trails, sometimes along trails of his own devising. At the mouth of several small tributary streams he had noted beaver cuttings along the banks; thus Nis-We-Bask travelled, mentally charting and placing the spots he and fellow hunters would return to in the spring-time. Beaver pelts stacked the height of a long rifle could be used to buy the rifle, at the new trading post at Fort Simpson. With such pleasant thoughts he came upon an ideal camp site, and gathering some dry twigs, made a small fire and prepared his evening meal of smoked fish roasted at the fire, then, having eaten, he rolled in his blanket and was soon asleep. Toward dawn Nis-We-Bask was awakened to instant alertness. That there was something watching him he could not doubt, and the feeling was almost physical, then in an instant the feeling was gone. He was certain that it was not an animal that had caused him to awaken so suddenly; too any animal would have made some slight sound in leaving that his trained hunter's hearing would have registered. At the first rays of dawn Nis-We-Bask was on his way, ever up the river. Despite the odd experience of the night before he was determined to reach the headwaters of this river before returning home.

The river lessened in size as Nis-We-Bask proceeded, and toward afternoon he arrived at a high

walled pass through which the stream ran. The river being low, it was not difficult to find a way along its edge, which on the inside opened into a fairly large valley, through which the river meandered. Following this, Nis-We-Bask came upon a burned over area fully the length of six war canoes and fully half as wide, the surface being as smooth as the surface of the deep water in the river. Vaguely troubled as to what may have caused this burned area, Nis-We-Bask prepared to spend the night, and on the morrow start the journey home.

Even as he sat by his fire Nis-We-Bask became aware of being watched in the half light of twilight. He could not see who or what could be the cause of it. There had been no sign of bears or other large animals, yet that feeling of being watched persisted. Then he remembered Kae-Ith's remarks to the effect that this was where the legendary giants had vanished. Still, why believe old squaws' tales? Those were only to frighten small children. The feeling of being watched became stronger, then the creatures appeared; the things that had been watching Nis-We-Bask. Even as he saw them he knew what they were. They were the Bow-iss, neither man or animal yet with the cunning and vileness of both. Creatures which in olden times, had boldly stolen children and women from the tribes; but they were supposed to have disappeared a long time back. The Bow-iss slowly shambled toward Nis-We-Bask making peculiar sounds as if laughing at some monstrous joke. Fancie stricken, yet quite unable to move, Nis-We-Bask watched the slow approach. Then the creatures circled him, removed his bow and arrows and knife; then with two in front and two behind they marched him back the way they had come.

Nis-We-Bask though terrified had time to observe these creatures closely. Each was about the size of a youth, though in shoulder breadth equal to a man, bow-legged and with long unkempt hair of a dirty brown color. Each was clad in loin-cloth and sandals of some smooth, shiny material, and at each belt was a knife and a small box-like affair which appeared to be a weapon of some sort. The creature in the lead headed for a low overhanging cliff at the base of which an opening to a cave was visible, followed by Nis-We-Bask and the other Bow-iss. Nis-We-Bask would have fled there and then, but even as he turned one of the Bow-iss aimed his little box-like weapon at him, causing extreme pain and paralyzing him completely. Amid wild, pealing laughter Nis-We-Bask fainted. When he regained consciousness, he and two of the creatures were traveling in a weird conveyance that made little sound yet travelled at great speed, along a wide shiny road. Inside the cave it was quite light for the very rock overhead shone with a pale silvery color. Ever downward their conveyance went, then finally came to a stop in what seemed a vast cavern.

Nis-We-Bask had no choice but to follow the creatures. He looked about for an exit should

escape be possible, but saw none save the way they had entered. On all sides towered terrifying monsters of metal that somehow or other seemed to have lives of their own; one or two even glowed with a weird blue light. Beyond that his mind could not conceive or describe. One of the Bow-iss aimed his little box-weapon at Nis-We-Bask causing that intense pain and paralysis, after which they dragged him over and chained him to a ring set in the floor of the cave, then they proceeded to place around him in a half circle a pile of wood, collected for this very purpose, this was then set afire. He knew what his fate would be; he was to be roasted alive. Already the heat from the fire was becoming unbearable. Realizing their captive's crazed fear the Bow-iss screamed and danced themselves into a frenzy, as moans and cries were forced from Nis-We-Bask's seared and cracked lips, then merciful unconsciousness.

Nis-We-Bask awoke to a feeling of infinite coolness and comfort; then he realized that he was still in the cave, but on that strange vehicle and being returned to the surface; but instead of the hideous creatures that had taken him down into the cave, the other occupant of the conveyance was a man, huge and fair of coloring. The giant seemed to be aware that Nis-We-Bask was awake, for he turned and smiled, then he spoke though his lips did not move.

"Have no fear Nis-We-Bask, you will be returned to your people, those whom you call the Bow-iss in this cave are no more. While we were absent our home was discovered and occupied by the Bow-iss. The gods were kind that we returned when we did."

Through Nis-We-Bask's mind ran the stories told him in his childhood of the giants who had visited his people in ages past. Surely this being was also one, ay, even the same, as were not these ones of ancient times immortal?

Soon they reached the cave entrance and the giant and Nis-We-Bask got out of the now motionless vehicle. Dimly Nis-We-Bask could discern the outline of something huge resting where that burned patch of earth was and he knew somehow that this monster had caused it. The giant broke in on his thoughts, in that way of speaking without uttering a sound.

"I will return you to your canoe at tidewater; do just as I instruct you to. Stand within this circle I have inscribed, close your eyes and do not on any account open them."

With that the giant left Nis-We-Bask and entered the cave again. Just then Nis-We-Bask felt a sickening falling feeling as if he were falling from a great height, then the feeling was gone, and he looked about to find himself on the sand near his canoe.

When Nis-We-Bask returned to his native village and tried to tell of his adventure, he was scoffed at as having a bad dream or falling and hurting his head and dreaming it all. But there were a few who did believe and some who still do.

THE END



**They were just rabbits in a cage,
but their death sentence meant a lot
more than was apparent on the surface**



DEATH SENTENCE

by **CHESTER S. GEIER**

I HAD something of the feeling of godhood as I stood there beside the control board, waiting for Professor Weller's signal. For in my hands was the power of life and death. Of course, it was only over two scrawny,

flop-eared rabbits, but I knew that the vibrator — even in model form — was deadly enough to kill human beings.

Death was there in the laboratory — waiting, just as I was waiting. Of the two of us, Death, I'm sure, was the

most patient. I was anxious to have done with this evening's business, anxious to get out of the laboratory and keep my date with Gail . . .

Professor Weller was talking, explaining how his invention worked. He waved his plump hands animatedly, and his round, ruddy face shone with triumph.

The three men listened . . .

Major William Calhern looked cold and suspicious. If his sole job was interviewing men like Professor Weller, I didn't blame him for looking that way. Major Calhern had been sent from Washington by the war department, to investigate the potentialities of the vibrator as a war weapon. He looked thin and hard, and somehow his uniform seemed just a bit too large for him.

Professor John Arndt looked disgusted. He hated war, and suffering, and death, and I knew that he hated the vibrator, hated Professor Weller for taking delight in explaining what the deadly thing could do . . .

Norman Hollis looked sullen. Occasionally he glanced at me, and I avoided his eyes. He was Gail's father, and I knew he was blaming me for my part in this, however slight it was. Norman Hollis was an inventor, too. The vibrator had been developed from an idea of his, and doubtless he felt that he had been robbed.

" . . . ultra high-frequency vibrations," Professor Weller was saying. "You've heard how a certain harp or violin note will shatter a thin glass goblet. Well, my invention utilizes the same principle, though on an infinitely greater scale. The vibrator, in fact, can cause glass to become dust, can pulverize brick and stone, and can weaken many metals."

Major Calhern asked, "Does your invention act also on human beings?"

WELLER nodded his white head vigorously. "It kills them—by destroying the delicate tissues of the brain. I will give a demonstration in a moment. First, notice that enclosure. It is soundproof, and so we may watch the proceedings quite in safety." He pointed at a great enclosed cage in one corner of the room. It had very thick walls, and the glass viewing plate set in the front was also thick. Within the enclosure sat the two rabbits, wriggling their pink noses. Some three feet above them, suspended from the roof of the enclosure, was the model vibrator.

Weller looked at Major Calhern. "Now for the demonstration. Try to imagine those two rabbits as human beings. All right, Kirk, go ahead."

This last was to me. Feeling like an executioner, I adjusted a couple of dials on the control board, then threw in a switch. I'd seen it happen before, but now I stared fascinatedly through the glass viewing plate of the enclosure.

The two rabbits started as the first vibrations hit them. Their ears jerked up, and they took a few hopping steps. Then they keeled over and lay still, and I knew they were dead.

It was as simple and unmelodramatic as that. The most deadly and efficient forms of death often strike that way.

The three men were silent, as though awed by what they had witnessed. Major Calhern no longer seemed cold and suspicious. His lean, hard face looked convinced—and even admiring. But Professor John Arndt's disgust had increased, as had Norman Hollis' sullenness.

Beaming like a showman who has put on an excellent performance, Weller walked over to the soundproof enclosure and unlocked a door in its side. First he removed the vibrator from its supports, setting the device on a workbench. Then he pulled out the dead

rabbits, laying them upon a table for examination.

Major Calhern was the only one who bothered to look them over. He did so with quick, deft movements of his thin, long-fingered hands. Then he straightened, nodding. To Weller, he said:

"I am satisfied, Professor, that your invention does just as you claim. I don't see, however, how it could be used safely by our side as a war weapon. We couldn't put our enemies in sound-proof chambers to kill them off, you know."

Weller chuckled. "Of course not. I will explain. Full-size vibrators would simply be dropped in enemy territory, with parachutes, by our airforce. Upon contact with the ground, they would automatically go into action. You've noticed the thickness of the enclosure walls necessary for safe use of the model vibrator. Imagine, then, the deadliness of one a dozen times as large and weighing three-hundred pounds! It would be effective for hundreds of yards. More effective than an atomic bomb—for where a bomb merely destroys, the vibrator would disintegrate utterly! And whereas the effects of a bomb last only for seconds, the vibrator would operate for periods as long as a half-hour."

"But when it stops . . . ?" Major Calhern said. "What is to prevent our enemies from analyzing the vibrators, manufacturing them, and turning them upon us?"

WELLER looked smug. "I've taken care of that. When the vibrator stops, another automatic control would go into action, causing the device to explode."

"I see. And does the model contain such an automatic control?"

"No, it is far too small to contain

the necessary parts." Weller became eager. "Well, Major Calhern, what is your opinion of the device?"

"Favorable, I assure you," Calhern responded. "Of course, more exhaustive tests will have to be made, using a full-size model, before the war department will consider using the invention. I will do everything within my power to see that you receive a proper hearing." Calhern glanced at his wristwatch. "And now I must leave to send in my report. You'll hear from me again in a few days."

Major Calhern shook hands with Arndt, Hollis, and myself, and then Professor Weller took him upstairs to show him out the door.

Arndt looked at the model vibrator on the workbench and growled deep in his throat. "Another and more deadly way of killing helpless people . . . as though we didn't have enough of that already! Makes me sick, just thinking of it. Well, I don't intend to stay and listen to that little egomaniac do further crowing over his invention." Arndt tugged his hat on his head with brisk, angry movements. "I'm leaving."

Hollis said abruptly, "I'm going with you. I have no desire to remain myself. Our colleague consistently forgot to mention that he developed the vibrator from one of my old ideas, and it would be a waste of time to demand credit where none is intended to be given."

They strode out of the laboratory, and their set faces left me with an unpleasant feeling of foreboding. When Professor Weller returned, his plump features were set in lines of anger.

"The stiff-necked, selfish fools!" he snarled. "They're jealous, Kirk—jealous! Men of science . . . bah!" Abruptly he shrugged. "Well, I've showed them. You can leave, Kirk."

I met Gail on our usual corner at eight. Because of the fact that I

worked for Professor Weller instead of her father, it was tacitly understood that I was none too welcome at her house. I'd have worked for Norman Hollis had he been able to pay me, but he couldn't, and he seemed to hold this fact against everyone, even including Gail. The life of an inventor is no bed of roses, and so I could hardly blame Weller for exulting in his moment of triumph. Hollis, I'm sure, would have done the same, just as Weller, too, would have been jealous and angry. That seems to be the way of life, and intelligent men are no exceptions.

Gail knew that her father had been present at Weller's demonstration, and she saw from my face that it had not come off quite as it should. She demanded to know what had happened. I explained reluctantly, going easy over the places where her father was concerned. But she was intuitive, and I knew my attempts at concealment hadn't been successful.

Gail was worried about her father, and what I had told her—or rather tried not to tell her—only served to make her more so. It had a dampening effect upon our evening.

We took in a movie at the largest of Groverton's two theatres, and then I saw Gail home. I lived with Professor Weller. It was about eleven-thirty when I got back.

I opened the door with my key. The light was on in the hall. The first thing I saw was Professor Weller. I almost stepped on him, in fact. He was lying there in the hall, just a few feet from the door, and he was very dead. The back of his skull was a mess of dried blood. A vicious blow on the head had killed him.

The horror of his silent figure held me motionless for a long moment. Then a sudden thought put me into motion, sent me running for the laboratory.

There could be only one reason for the murder of Professor Weller. The vibrator!

When I reached the laboratory, my eyes darted to the workbench, upon which I had last seen the invention. It was gone!

SHERIFF JOSHUA STROUD had his office in the Groverton courthouse. It was there that I found him, after having futilely telephoned his home and usual evening haunts. He explained he had been working late upon a case. I told him of Professor Weller's murder and the theft of the vibrator. He groaned and promised to come right up.

Sheriff Stroud arrived about twenty minutes later. With him were Bixby, his deputy, and Salter, the coroner. Groverton isn't a big town, in spite of the fact that it possesses a university. I guessed that Stroud's lateness was due to the necessity of routing his two assistants out of bed.

"Another murder!" Stroud grumbled, gazing irascibly at the body of Professor Weller.

I stared at him in sudden apprehension. "Another murder?" I echoed. "What do you mean, Sheriff?" I was thinking of Hollis and Arndt.

"Found a dead man about three miles out of town this morning," Stroud explained. "Somebody shot him through the head. I haven't identified him yet. The person who killed him took all his papers, even ripped the labels out of his clothes."

Stroud shrugged and turned away. I wasn't fooled by his impatient, grumbling attitude. He had a reputation for being a relentless lawhound who always got his man. There were quite a few sinister stories about his law enforcing methods, but there was no denying the fact that he always got results.

Salter stood up. "Killed by a blow on the head. Some kind of blunt instrument. Dead about two hours."

"Two hours, eh?" Stroud said. He swung back to me. "Where were you, Rowan?"

"I was seeing a movie at the Ridge with Gail Hollis," I told him.

"What time was it that you last saw Weller alive?"

"About ten to eight."

"He was alone when you left him?"

"Yes." I added that the cooking and house-cleaning was done by Mrs. Guthrie, a neighbor. She lived a few doors down the block, communicating between her home and Weller's, as her duties required. She was seldom around in the evenings.

Stroud rubbed his studded jaw, his thin, dark face grim. "The way I see it, someone came to see Weller about an hour after you left. Weller let him in, then this person hit Weller over the head, killing him. You mentioned his invention being stolen over the telephone. That seems to have been the motive for the murder. Got any ideas about who may have done it, Rowan?"

I SHRUGGED. I told Stroud of the demonstration which Professor Weller had given earlier in the evening, and of the three men who had been present, Major Calhern, Norman Hollis, and John Arndt. To my knowledge, only these three had known sufficient about the invention to consider it worth murder and theft.

Stroud's black eyes lighted. "Hollis and Arndt . . . I happen to know these two were no particular friends of Weller's—especially Hollis. I'm pretty sure one of the two murdered him."

Stroud made an examination of the house and laboratory. He found nothing, however, and presently led his two yawning assistants away. Later, the

men from the undertaker's arrived, and Professor Weller's remains were carried out.

There was no sleep for me. I spent the greater part of the night chain-smoking and pacing the floor.

A little after eleven the next morning, Sheriff Stroud was back at the house. His presence came as a relief to me. Mrs. Guthrie was afraid of him, as were many in Groverton, and she left when he came. She had been plaguing me with questions all morning, doubtless to arm herself with gossip to regale her curious friends. I could very easily imagine how news of Professor Weller's murder must have fired Groverton.

"Learn anything?" I asked Stroud.

He shrugged. "I questioned Hollis and Arndt, and they let me search their places. If either of them has the invention, it isn't where you can find it very easily. Arndt claims to have been home all last night, and his housekeeper, that Harrick woman, vouches for him. I think you've heard some of the rumors about Arndt and Susan Harrick. They live like man and wife, if you're willing to believe gossip. They might be lying—but how can I prove it?"

"As for Hollis, he was home alone, what with Gail gone to the movies with you. Hollis says he didn't set foot out of the house all evening. He might have come here and murdered Weller, but there's no slightest bit of evidence.

"I checked on that Major Calhern, too. Washington sent him here to Groverton, all right. And the night clerk at the hotel says Calhern came in about seven-thirty and stayed in all evening. That leaves Hollis and Arndt. Rowan, I'm convinced that one of the two murdered Weller and stole his invention. Somehow, I've got to find out which one it was." His voice grew grim. "There must be some way!"

There was a long period of silence, during which Stroud stared into space, his dark brows knitted fiercely. More to break the silence than anything else, I told him that I had discovered something else. In going through the laboratory that morning, I had found that Professor Weller's records had undergone a hasty search. Every piece of paper relating to the vibrator had been taken.

"The laboratory . . ." Stroud said musingly. "Let's go down there, Rowan."

The laboratory looked ghostly in such of the morning sunlight as managed to filter in through the few grimy windows. I switched on the lights, and Stroud looked around. He asked:

"Where was the invention when you saw it last, Rowan?"

I pointed mutely at the workbench.

"An easy matter to find it, then," Stroud muttered. "Look," he said abruptly, "how did Weller's invention work? What did it do?"

EXPLANATION of the operating principle of the vibrator would have gone over Stroud's head. I merely told him that the device emitted ultra high-frequency vibrations capable of disintegrating glass and stone, and also of destroying the delicate tissues of the brain in human beings. Because of its deadliness, the vibrator could never be operated, except within the thick, specially-constructed confines of the test chamber. Turning it on and off was accomplished by remote control.

Stroud gazed keenly at me as I finished. "Remote control? How do you mean, Rowan? Wires, or something like that?"

"Radio," I explained. I indicated the control board. "That's basically a radio transmitter. It's quite powerful."

Stroud was suddenly tense. "How powerful, Rowan? Powerful enough to reach across Groverton?"

I gasped, "Good Lord—yes!" And then I stared at him. And as I stared, I recalled all the unsavory stories I had heard about the ruthless means whereby he had served the ends of justice. I realized now what he meant to do. Whoever had killed Professor Weller still had the vibrator. And the device, wherever it was now, could be put into action by the radio transmitter!

It would reveal one of two things—or both. It would destroy its hiding place, thus indicating the location of the murderer of Professor Weller. Or, if the murderer were near enough, it would destroy him, too!

Thus, after the vibrator had been put into action, a simple check would solve the case. I said as much to Stroud.

"Exactly," he said softly. His black eyes were intense upon mine.

"But that's hardly legal!" I protested. "What you mean to do would be equivalent to an unofficial death sentence."

Stroud made a curt gesture of impatience. "Don't be a hidebound fool, Rowan. We're dealing with a murderer—someone who must pay the penalty for his crime. This is the only way we have of finding him and getting evidence against him. Using ordinary legal methods, I'd be helpless. I haven't a shred of proof against anyone."

"I won't do it!" I snapped. And I knew why I wouldn't do it. I was very much afraid that the person who had killed Professor Weller and stolen his invention was Norman Hollis. Everything pointed to the man. He had hated Weller, feeling as he did that the vibrator was the result of one of his own ideas, a debt for which Weller hadn't given him the slightest bit of

credit. And he had been envious of Weller's accomplishment, jealous of the fame it would bring the other. Hollis had been alone all evening. He might very well have come to the house, killed Weller, and stolen the invention . . .

But he was Gail's father—and I loved Gail. Suppose he were really the murderer . . . suppose he were near the vibrator when I caused it to operate by means of the transmitter—his death would be on my hands. And murderer or not, Gail would blame me for the death of her father. She wouldn't marry a man with her father's blood on his hands . . .

IT WAS a nasty situation. The more I thought about it, the less I liked it. Operating that transmitter might very well solve the case for Stroud—but it would sure as hell complicate my own case. It would spoil all my hopes and plans where Gail was concerned.

Stroud shifted impatiently. His black eyes were cold. "Rowan, this is my only chance to solve the case. I tell you, I won't be balked!"

"I won't do it," I muttered. "I just can't do it!"

"And why, Rowan? What're you afraid of? Do you know who the murderer is? You wouldn't like to have him die?"

I shook my head dumbly.

Stroud exploded, "By God, Rowan, if you won't operate that radio, I'll do it myself!"

"You don't know how," I said.

"You could show me how."

"You'll have to force me."

Stroud brought his thin, dark face close to mine. His black eyes blazed at me. "I'll do just that. Rowan, remember I'm the Law. I've got the power to command."

"Not in this case!" I snapped. "It isn't legal. You may be the Law—but

your authority doesn't possess the powers of judge, jury, and executioner. You're sentencing a man to death without first bringing him to trial."

"You're a fool!" Stroud flamed. "How can you be sure the murderer will be anywhere near the invention when you operate the radio? And as for bringing him to trial—haven't I explained that's impossible? I haven't the slightest bit of proof against anyone." His eyes narrowed, and his voice became deadly soft. "Rowan, you're obstructing justice. I could have you up for that . . . Or, Rowan, I could fix it so that you'd get the blame for Weller's murder. Don't doubt it an instant. I've got to get a murderer, and if I can't get the real one, you'll do."

And Stroud meant it, I knew. Every word of it.

I was trapped—and there was no way out. There was nothing I could do but what Stroud wanted me to do.

I shrugged my shoulders wearily and nodded. "I give in," I said.

Stroud's smile was thin and hard. "Good! Let's get to work at once."

"Wait," I said. "I want to call up Gail Hollis, to get her out of the house."

"So that's the answer, eh?" Stroud exclaimed. "You're sure Norman Hollis is the murderer. You're afraid the girl will get hurt if the invention happens to be hidden in the house. . . . All right, you can call her—but no tricks, Rowan. Don't try to warn Hollis."

Stroud accompanied me to the telephone, and his glittering black eyes watched me every second I spoke. My ruse was a simple one. I merely told Gail to meet me at our usual corner, that it was important. I didn't explain. I told her that, and then I hung up.

I GOT to work upon the radio transmitter, making the adjustments necessary to reach the vibrator. Then I

was ready. I breathed a silent prayer for Gail, and I breathed a silent prayer for myself. And I hoped against hope that Norman Hollis, if he had the vibrator, wouldn't be within its deadly range.

I threw in the switch.

Stroud demanded, "It's done?"

I nodded like a puppet. I couldn't speak. I felt as though I'd never be able to speak again.

Lips pressed against his teeth in a wolfish grin, eyes glittering like bits of polished jet, Stroud ran from the laboratory. I sat down and stared into empty space. I was afraid to think.

How much later it was when I heard the doorbell ring, I don't know. It roused me from my apathy. I went up to open the door.

Gail stumbled into my arms. "Kirk! What's wrong? You sounded so queer over the telephone. . . . And I waited at the corner, and you didn't come. I got worried and rushed over here." She searched my face anxiously. "Kirk, what is it? What has happened?"

I couldn't bring myself to explain. I was afraid to tell her what I had done—afraid to tell her that her father might be dead even now, and that I was the one responsible.

Gail clutched at my arms. "Kirk—what is it? Why don't you tell me?"

I gulped my voice into action. "I can't tell you, honey," I said. "Stroud and I are working on something which may solve the mystery of Professor Weller's death. We've got to wait until Stroud comes back. Then you'll know."

Gail looked doubtful, but she desisted from questioning me. She went into the kitchen and made coffee. It was good coffee—but I didn't notice that then. I was thinking furiously.

Hollis. Was the murderer Hollis? Was he dead now—or still alive? I hoped desperately that he was still alive.

Or Arndt. Arndt might very well be the murderer. I prayed that it would be Arndt.

The afternoon wore away with infinite slowness. The suspense of waiting, not knowing, almost drove me mad.

And then—at long last—there was the sound of a car stopping before the house. Gail and I rushed to the door as Sheriff Stroud burst in.

"Well, the case is solved!" Stroud announced triumphantly. "I've caught the murderer of Professor Weller. It worked beautifully, Rowan."

"Who—who was it?" I husked.

"Calhern," Stroud replied.

I WENT weak with relief. My legs became so rubbery, I had to sit down in a chair. The next instant implications of the name hit me, and I bounced up with a cry of protest.

"But that's impossible!" I yelled. "Calhern couldn't have been the murderer. Why—why, he had been sent from Washington by the war department. He wouldn't do a thing like that!"

"But he did, Rowan." Stroud's grin broadened. "You see, Calhern wasn't Calhern at all, but an immensely clever international spy masquerading as Calhern. The real Calhern was the unidentified dead man I found outside of town yesterday morning!"

I sat down in the chair again.

Stroud went on, "What obviously happened is this. Somehow the spy learned about the real Major Calhern's mission. He intercepted Calhern on the outskirts of Groverton. Probably, he forced Calhern's car into the ditch, then shot Calhern, and exchanged his clothes for Calhern's uniform, ripping out the labels as he did so. Then he drove on into town, a confederate driving away Calhern's own car.

"The spy wanted Professor Weller's invention. Our enemies would gladly have given him a fortune for a thing like that at this time. He attended Professor Weller's demonstration, learning all that he wanted to know. Then, later in the evening, he slipped out of the hotel, went to Weller's house, and killed him, taking the invention and all the notes relating to it.

"The spy's room was on the second floor. It would have been an easy matter to run a rope out of the window, thus getting in and out without the night clerk seeing him. The vibrator itself he had left in his car."

"But how did you catch him?" I demanded. "How did you find out?"

"I didn't catch him," Stroud said. "The vibrator did. We used the radio just in time. The spy was leaving town. He was about a mile out when the invention went into action. His car crashed into a tree. There wasn't much left of him, but from the papers in the uniform he wore, I found out all I needed to know."

Stroud grinned and started for the door. "Well, that's that. I've still got some work to do, though." He grinned again, waved at us, and left.

I bounced out of the chair. Gail never knew why I yelled with joy. She still doesn't know why I hugged her so hard. . . .

THE END



WIRELESS TO THE HEART



BEHIND most scientific discoveries is a history of long years of research and testing. Only occasionally do we hear of a startling insight that comes with almost no forethought. Yet this is the truth behind the birth of the stethoscope, one of medicine's most valuable aids. We take this odd-shaped instrument which is used for listening to the heart beats and for examining the lungs for grunts, but it was not always here; it was not here before 1816.

It is to Dr. Rene Laennec, a thin, tense, forceful Frenchman, that we owe the credit for this valuable discovery. Amazing as it may seem, it took a simple combination of incidents to help bring about the invention of the stethoscope.

One afternoon in 1816, Dr. Laennec was on his way to visit a patient suffering from a heart malady. Diseases of the heart were of special interest to him. He, like most of his colleagues of that day, bemoaned the fact that there was no way of attacking these ailments, no instruments to detect a failing in this, the most vital of all the organs of the body.

Thoughts of this nature were absorbing Dr. Laennec's attention on this particular day. However, he was not so engrossed as to be oblivious to the sight on the street before him. Two unkempt young boys were playing in a lumberyard. One of them was picking at the head of a pin which had been driven into the end of a ten foot board. At the other end, his friend was listening to the sounds of the tappings. Dr. Laennec paused. He was not so much intrigued at this "code" game thought up by the children, as by the fact that the vibrations made by the tapping of a pin could carry through the fibers of wood so perfectly.

He wondered if the same principle could be applied to the diagnosing of heart diseases.

Impatient to carry out his experiment, Dr. Laennec hurried on to the home of his patient. Once there, he rolled a large sheet of paper into a tight cylinder. Placing one end of it against his patient's chest, and the other end to his ear, he found that his hopes had been justified. The action of the heart was amplified many times.

As time went on he tried improving the device. At first he rolled three notebooks tightly together and then glued a sheet of paper around them. Obviously this was too impractical because it was made of paper. Since Laennec was not only a doctor but also a carpenter, he copied the instrument in wood. It was simply a cylinder of light wood about twelve inches long and an inch and a half in diameter. At first the baton, as Laennec first called that which was later to be known as a stethoscope, was solid. But through use he found that if he bored a hole through this so that it looked like a wooden pipe, it was much more effective.

Gradually more improvements were made. One end of the instrument was widened so it looked more like a bell. This was the part that was to be placed against the chest. Laennec spent the remaining ten years of his life in developing the stethoscope because he, like many other of our scientists, saw in it, a valuable tool.

He finally died in Brittany, France, on August 13, 1826, and left the world with an invention which is a constant aide in the never-ending fight against the diseases of mankind. And it all came about as the result of an innocent "code" game played by two French boys.—Roy Cadden.



Giant of Ganymede

by **ROSS ROCKLYNNE**

WELL," the big man said as he came into the nursery, "looks like the flower business has gone to pot!" His crooked smile showed poor teeth—and poor

humor, too, Jimmy Tracer thought to himself. Jimmy Tracer was a serious young man and a horticulturist with years of experience. That pun had whiskers.



**So you think being a florist is a
dull job? Not if it's on another world!**

"It always does drop off," he murmured politely, "when Callisto is on the Sunless side of Jupiter. I didn't expect any florists' representatives until next week. Help you off with your

bulger?"

"Naw," the other man grinned. He unbuckled the helmet of his "bulger," let it drop over his shoulders. "I'm not any florist's representative and the

business I've got with you can take a minute."

Something snapped in his eyes; maybe something unpleasant. His massive, stubbled jaw moved disjointedly back and forth as he got the bad taste of space-suit air out of his mouth.

"Here's my problem. I've got a seven-passenger space-ship out on your landing-field and I had an accident. A short circuit on the Wittenberg power-cables. Burned all the *keoloo*-rubber insulation off, it did. I want some *keoloo*-rubber."

"That's too bad. I don't happen to have any."

"Listen. I need some *keoloo*-rubber. I happen to know you got every plant that grows in the Saturnian or the Jovian System. You've got *chirido* from Io, and glass plants from Iapetus, and big, creeping, living snake-plants in an ammonia bath from the surface of Jupiter itself. You've got jigsaw-hoppers from Encephaladus, *quina* from Titan and bugle-beans from Titan."

"And death-mats from Davy Jones," finished Jimmy Tracer firmly. "But I haven't got any *keoloo*-trees."

"That's impossible!" the big man suddenly shouted. "*Keoloo*-trees grow anywhere."

"Do you know anything about *keoloo*-trees?"

"I don't know a damn thing about 'em! All I know is—"

"That you need some *keoloo*-rubber. Well, before you can tap a *keoloo*-tree, sir, the tree has to be at least two-hundred-fifty feet high. And before I could have any *keoloo* here, I'd have to build a nursery for them over three-hundred feet high, because they grow fast. And before you can go to the expense of building a nursery like that, you have to make lots of money from the nursery business, and you know, sir, the market for Jovian and Saturnian

flora is—limited. That's all, sir."

Jimmy Tracer's tone was grim, and he indicated that the man had shouted at him once too often.

The other's chest heaved. Then slowly his face cleared. He looked at Jimmy with respect.

"You're a cool one. Giving me the shake-down. Okay. Maybe there's no *keoloo*s on Callisto, but there are some on the other Jovian worlds. Not far from here. I can get there on my auxiliary rockets. You go along with me and show me where there're some *keoloo*s and tap 'em for me. And I'll give you enough money to build a *keoloo* nursery!"

Jimmy Tracer grabbed at the glasses on his studious face. He took them off, and blinked at the other man.

"I'd have to take your word for that?"

"Word, hell! I'll sign a check!"

He bent over a glass case with a check book and pen. He scrawled a signature which looked like Wilbur Hall. There was something about that name . . . but Tracer couldn't place it. Hall shoved the check at him, and the horticulturist filled in an amount of money exactly equal to that necessary to build a *keoloo* nursery. He looked at the check grimly. In another few days Dorothy Bryant and her father would land with a party of business friends on Callisto. Dorothy's father would make insulting remarks about the paltry living a planetary horticulturist made; not enough of a living to take care of his daughter the way she was accustomed to being taken care of by a doting father. Then, Jimmy Tracer thought savagely to himself, he'd show J. S. Bryant, owner of the Inner Planets Space-Transit Manufacturing Company, just how much a sap of a planetary horticulturist could make. He'd show him this check.

And then . . . *please God* . . . maybe J. S. would pick out the Jovian instead of the Saturnian system of worlds for a site on which to build his new space-ship manufacturing factory!

JIMMY TRACER'S Callistonian nurseries were not exactly a "going concern." He had his troubles. But there was a tenacity about him which did not show in his lank, rather flatly built body. He did know where there were some *keoloo* trees, because of this tenacity. The facts are these:

Just as there was a mal-distribution of industrial development on the planet Earth all through most of the Twentieth Century, so in this century was there a mal-distribution throughout the Solar System. The minor planets, Mars, Earth, the Moon, Venus, Mercury, and one or two large asteroids, had been exploited by the large ore refining, machine-tool, and space-ship manufacturing concerns. Modern improvements were magically transforming these worlds into latter-day Babylons and Romes—paradises of comfort and sane living. Not so the Outer Planets, where pioneers hopelessly battled conditions that could be improved were it not for the tremendous distances which existed between them and the source of modern technological equipment. The Inner Planets did not even bother to draw off more than a fraction of the tremendous natural resources the Outer Planets could provide them. This made the Plutonian, Uranian, Saturnian and Jovian Worlds the neglected rim of man's empire. The people, those who had thought to better their lot, those who had faith in the coming industrial expansion of the Outer Planet frontiers, were stricken with poverty, and the tragedies that occurred in connection with that great faith will never be completely written.

Jimmy Tracer was one of those who had had faith, and his struggle to build and equip his nurseries will never be written either. Yet, having accomplished the impossible, he dared to look into the future. Someday—*someday!*—the industries would move out to Jupiter and Saturn, and farther. Space-ships would be built right here in the Jovian System! And space-ships needed *keoloo*-rubber for insulation purposes—needed plenty of it. Jimmy Tracer took his cue, got a land-grant from the Martian government, and started a *keoloo* tree plantation on one of the Jovian Worlds.

Two years after the first saplings had pushed through the soil, Dorothy Bryant had written Jimmy Tracer a letter, suggesting vaguely that her father was thinking of maybe building an ore-refining and space-ship manufacturing out "in that neck of the woods. He'd spank me if he even *thought* I'd mentioned it to you, Jimmy darling, because it's a deep-dyed secret. I simply must tell you though, Jimmy precious. You won't ever get ahead mothering all those horrible, silly plants in your nurseries—well, go ahead and get mad again, but you *won't!* Here's what I was thinking. You know that territory out there so well, that maybe, if and when Dad does decide to industrialize the Jovian Worlds, maybe you can convince Dad into giving you a good superintendent's job in the factory—maybe an expeditor's job. Then you can make enough money so Dad won't be so much against our marriage. . . ."

Jimmy had torn up that letter, savagely. Then, just last week, Dorothy had written him again, saying that she was leaving with her mother and father and a party of business friends and they would stop by on Callisto to see Jimmy. The big news was that J. S. Bryant was definitely looking for a site for a

space-ship factory, but so far he was undecided between the Saturnian and the Jovian System. . . .

Please God, thought Jimmy, make it the Jovian System, because then I can supply J. S. with all the keoloo rubber he'll want!

JIMMY straightened and showed the check to the big man in the space-suit. Hall barely looked at it.

"That's fine, fine. Any amount. This is important to me. What satellite do we set our course for?"

"Ganymede. . . ."

Jimmy walked across the airless space between the big flat dome that covered the nurseries, toward his landing field. He had given instructions to his assistant to take care of things until he got back . . . oh, maybe in three or four days. Hall walked beside Jimmy. Both had their space-suits zippered up, their helmets buckled down.

The airlock door of Hall's small, blunt-nose, meteor-scarred ship was being held open by one of Hall's crew. Jimmy looked at the man's face and didn't like the gimlet, cruel eyes. He hesitated, appalled by the panic he felt.

He didn't hesitate long. Hall took his arm in a grip as strong as a Jovian suction pump. He helped Hall into the ship, through the airlock. They walked down an echoing corridor, halted before a solid metal door.

Hall was looking at Jimmy through the gloom. "These are your quarters, Tracer. Might as well take your space-suit off." Jimmy did, slowly.

The member of the crew with Hall opened the door and then Hall grinned down at Tracer.

"Sucker!" he said. Then he roared with laughter. "Sucker!"

The door opened all the way, and Hall shoved Jimmy inside . . . shoved him so forcefully he went slamming

against the opposite wall. The door clicked shut. Jimmy was knocked half unconscious, his brain scalded with incredible thoughts, with horror at a sudden revelation. But it couldn't be! Groggily, he felt his mind focussing, but his body joggled against the wall again as the ship's rockets thundered through the metal plates, and the ship plowed with rapid acceleration toward heaven. . . . Then he slumped and he felt the slow tears of self-disgust forming under his closed eyelids. Somehow, for a reason he didn't know, he had been—tricked!

WHEN Jimmy Tracer finally had the nerve to face the living world again, he saw that he wasn't alone in the cabin. There were four other men—men dressed in tweeds and worsteds and serges—men in correct business attire. They were sitting glumly in chairs and looking at Jimmy. Jimmy's widening eyes fastened on one distinguished, grey-headed man who had carried the handsomeness of his youth into middle-age.

"J.S." Jimmy said blankly. "Dad!"

"Don't call me 'dad,'" J. S. Bryant said coldly, his hands sunk deep in his pockets, his long legs spread out to their full length as he glared down at Jimmy. "I've told you I wouldn't let you marry my daughter if you were the Last Man, and the race needed a fresh start. I double-mean it now. Sucker! So you let Wild Bill Hall take you in."

"No!" Jimmy chattered. "No! I'll show you. I've got a check—a big check, signed by Wilbur Hall. It's—"

"A rubber check," said J. S. "Signed by Wild Wilbur Hall."

"It can't be," Jimmy panted. "He wrote me a check. I'm going to show him where there's some keoloo-rubber trees on Ganymede, so he can—"

He stopped when he saw all four men

looking at him with hatred.

"You poor sap," said J. S. Bryant in a soft voice. "Let me tell you a story. We—these three men and Dorothy and her mother and a maid in the next room—"

"Dorothy's here? In the next cabin?"

"Dorothy's here. We were all about seven hours out from Callisto, making good speed in my yacht. Wild Bill Hall—look him up in the police records of eight different planets if you live through this—rammed our ship, killed the captain and the chief engineer. Sparks managed to get a radio message off and a reply from the nearest police cruiser before they killed him. Wild Bill Hall took us aboard his ship and started out for his hide-out on Pluto. He knew and we knew the police were following him, had him stuck on their detectors. Once he gets to Pluto he's safe, and he can demand fancy ransoms for us, meanwhile cutting off our fingers and toes and sending them back parcel post to show the authorities he means business."

"That can't be true," Jimmy whispered.

J. S. Bryant said savagely, "Sometimes I think you can't be true. Dumb people like you couldn't exist. I'll tell you why. About three hours ago, when they opened the door to give us something to eat, we dragged the pirate inside, shoving the tray of food in his face. I grabbed his flare-stick and made a break for it. I know how these ships are made. I got as far as the anatherm tube next to the engine room, and I sprayed the electric connection with a beam of solid heat. Short circuit. I burned all the keoloo-rubber insulation off the gravitonic-power cables. Keoloo is the only substance that will keep gravitons from leaking back into the interior of atoms, where they came from. Ergo, Wild Bill Hall had to trav-

el on his auxiliary rockets until he could get some keoloo. They didn't kill me, because I'm worth money to them. We were very happy, Jimmy Tracer, because we knew the police cruiser following us would catch up and we'd all live happily ever after. We were happy until Wild Bill Hall pulled a sucker trick on a Callistonian horticulturist I wish I didn't know!"

ONE of the other men in the room squirmed and looked a little shame-faced. "Please, John," he said apologetically. "You're being hard on the boy. He didn't know why Hall wanted the—"

J. S. jumped to his feet, throwing his hands in the air. "All right, all right!" he shouted. "So I'm being hard on him. You've all gone against me, ever since this trip started. You men want Jupiter—and I say Saturn! Well, I continue to say Saturn, and Saturn it's going to—"

He stopped, clamping his lips. He drew a deep breath, and stepping to the wall, he rapped on it with his knuckles.

"Martha!" he called sharply. "Your prospective son-in-law is here!"

"Jimmy!"

The muted squeal of delight came out from J.S.'s wife hut from his daughter, Dorothy. Jimmy Tracer momentarily forgot himself and his incredible shame. He scrambled to his feet, pressing his body against the cold metal panels of the cabin wall.

"Dorothy!" he begged. "Say you're all right—that—that—"

"Of course I'm all right," she cried. "Oh, Jimmy—Jimmy, darling! It's been so long since—" She stopped suddenly, and when she spoke again it was in a whisper Jimmy could hardly hear through the wall. "But Jimmy, this—this means you're a prisoner,

too. . . ."

Jimmy Tracer's tongue clove to his mouth. He looked appealingly at J.S. Bryant.

J.S. said irritably, "Go ahead and tell her—the truth. The scatter-brain will keep on loving you anyway." He sat down in his chair and rested his head disgustedly on the heels of his hands.

Jimmy wrenched the story out as if he were the accused on the witness stand, facing a whole court-room. Afterwards, Dorothy was silent for a long minute. When she spoke, her voice was determined.

"Ganymede is a large planet, Jimmy. Wild Bill Hall still doesn't know exactly where the *keoloo* trees are located. Well, Jimmy Tracer, when he asks you, you simply don't tell him!"

Her voice rose brightly, but there was an ashen pallor on Jimmy's face. He writhed internally. The four men in the room were looking at him with a renewed hope.

"She's right," breathed a short, dumpy man—Vice President Fahrenstock of the Inner Planets Space-Ship Co., Jimmy later found out. "That's our only chance. Hold Hall off as long as you can. Even if he—tortures you for the information."

The four men were suddenly electrified, on their feet, crowding around Jimmy. J.S. Bryant's flinty eyes bored into Jimmy's for a long moment, as if searching for something deeply buried in his personality, a strength, perhaps, a superhuman endurance that would enable him to stand against Hall. Whether he found it or not, he gave no indication. J.S.'s hand dropped to Jimmy's shoulder.

"We're depending on you, Jimmy." The acid sternness in his voice did not abate. "This may turn into a matter of life and death . . . and whether we live or die, may rest with you."

It was almost as if he were trying to induct some of his own rigid strength of soul into Jimmy, the way he gripped his shoulder; almost as if he were trying to tell Jimmy that he *could* be a kind father-in-law if only Jimmy. . . .

Jimmy took off his glasses. He always had more courage to say his mind when the people he was talking to blurred a little. And he had to have courage, courage to meet Hall as well as to stand up against these men who were accusing him of more than he was guilty of.

"It's all right for you men to talk about torture," he said slowly. "You don't know what it is. I was captured by Ionian bush natives once, while I was scraping a parasitic fungus off one of their sacred *cir* trees. I fought my way free after two days of periodic torture. . . ."

He stopped. The four men were seated, their eyes averted from him. They'd had their say. They'd put it up to him. Jimmy sat down against the wall, his lips pursed, the freckles bridging his slightly reddish, pinched-up nose showing against the paleness of his face. He kept his glasses off. . . .

CONVERSATION died for the next three hours. The men had nothing more to say to him, and certainly he and Dorothy couldn't talk about the things they'd like to talk about when there were so many people to listen. The ship rushed through space, across ten million miles of void that separated Callisto from Ganymede. It was when Jimmy felt the blunt-nosed decelerating that he knew the half-way mark of the trip had been reached. He almost knew to the dot when Hall's men would come for him and he was standing up when they hurst open the door.

"You," said one of them, and shoved

Jimmy out into the corridor before he could answer Dorothy's sudden cry. He was urged down a companionway, past the howling Wittenbergs, through the engine room, and then up into the control room, where Wild Bill Hall was standing fork-legged behind his seated navigator. The tremendous bulk of the man, limned against the broad view-plate which showed the gray circle of Ganymede ballooning toward them, grew a knot in Jimmy's stomach.

Hall turned around as his men hustled Jimmy Tracer in. His big-pored face grinned mockingly.

"Ah, the plant expert!" He grabbed Jimmy's arm and held him so he was looking through the view-plate. "That's Ganymede, Tracer! But Ganymede's a big place. Now you can tell us where the *keoloo* trees are! Latitude and longitude."

"I'm not going to tell you," said Jimmy.

"I gave you a check," said Wild Bill Hall, looking down at Jimmy, his expression beginning to grow brutal.

"A rubber check," said Jimmy fiercely.

Wild Bill Hall said, shoving Jimmy away, "Okay, boys. Go to work on him!"

The two men who had brought Jimmy in went for him. Jimmy met them, his eyes pinpoints. He got a headlock on one that turned into an Oriental strangle-hold. The man made a gawking sound, and Jimmy threw him over his shoulders. The other man came up behind Jimmy, kicked him between the shoulder blades and Jimmy smashed face first against the bulkhead. He fell, his nose washing his face in his own blood.

Wild Bill Hall held his men off at this point. Hall said sharply, "Give up, Tracer. You may know yoga and judo but you can't stand against five

men."

Jimmy Tracer dragged himself up the side of the bulkhead to a standing position. His eyes were blazing on Wild Bill Hall, blazing and blurred. Wild Bill Hall towered over him, and Jimmy thought savagely of a big *keoloo* tree. That's how big Hall seemed then. His hands were on his hips, and he was leaning forward a little—leaning forward and curving, the way a *keoloo* curves when you leave the gate in too—

SOMETHING clicked in Jimmy's brain, the way an alarm clock clicks when it isn't set to go off. But it wasn't two seconds after that before the bell rang. He kept his face the way it was, blazing with resentment, but his thoughts were racing down another channel.

"I'll tell," he panted, wiping his face. "You've got me. Latitude 30° 58' 17" N., Longitude 170° 22' 42" E. You'll recognize the place. Set in a valley. Little three-room cabin I built. Land near the cabin—I planted the first *keoloo* trees there. But—but—" suddenly his face was mingling sweat with claret "—do me the favor of—"

"Repeat that latitude and longitude again, Tracer."

Jimmy repeated it and Wild Bill nodded. "Okay. Maybe you've given us the right dope. We'll find out. What favor?"

"Keep me here in the control room with you. I—I promised them back in the cabin that I wouldn't give you the location—"

"Take him back!" ordered Hall. "He's trying to pull a trick, maybe, and I can't take a chance."

They hauled Tracer away and seconds later he was thrust into the cabin. His face turned red as four men rose as one. He needed to say nothing.

Fahenstock pulled out his watch. His tone was cutting. "You've been gone ten minutes. You didn't give them a chance to break you down, even. To use the vernacular, you—ratted."

J. S. Bryant suddenly seemed like an old man. He sat down unsteadily. "I'm disappointed in you, boy." His eyes were averted.

Jimmy Tracer's chest heaved. "You men have to listen to me," he panted. "I've got an idea—a good idea, and if—"

"Never mind, son," said one of the other men gently, wearily. "Sit down. I guess—I guess maybe you couldn't help yourself, a little fellow like—forget it." Silence came, and four men sat in various attitudes of dejection. Jimmy Tracer walked with leaden steps across the cabin. He suddenly doubted his own mind. Maybe it wouldn't work. *Maybe?* Why, it couldn't work. He was a fool to think he was big enough to get the best of Hall—

"Jimmy?" It was Dorothy's voice, timid with fear of what he would tell her.

Something broke loose in Jimmy. "Yes! I told them!" he shouted. "Now you know it. You can go ahead and hate me. Who cares!" He sank to a sitting position, burying his face in his hands, inwardly tortured. Dorothy said nothing more, but Jimmy could almost hear her perplexed sigh.

THEY came for Jimmy again when the ship sloughed to a gentle landing on the soft humus of Ganymede's forest soil. Two of the pirates led him outside the ship, where Wild Bill Hall was standing with the rest of his men, looking appreciatively at the brittle, waist-high forest growth, at the towering, branchless, geometrically vertical columns of the *keoloo* trees. Everybody was without space-suits. There

was ten pounds of pressure to the square inch on Ganymede. There was oxygen. The air was cold, but this planet, heated in some degree from its molten interior, was livable.

Wild Bill Hall breathed deeply, and stretched his giant arms.

"Well, we ain't got much time to waste," he ruminated lazily. "How long before we can tap enough *keoloo* rubber to insulate the power cables, Tracer?"

"It'll take a full day—twenty-four hours," said Jimmy firmly. He adjusted his glasses. It was dark and gloomy on Ganymede, because Jupiter was hanging on the horizon, and hardly threw off more light than a half-Moon. You couldn't even see the tops of the tallest *keoloo*s.

"What?" Hall's mouth fell open angrily. "That's impossible. Lord, Tracer, don't try to pull any fast ones on me. We've got cops on our trail."

Wild Bill Hall's navigator interposed thoughtfully, "Nope, Chief. Our detectors put the police a couple days away—that's how I figure it."

Hall was relieved. "That's good. That's plenty good. But I still want to know why it'll take twenty-four hours, if we tap all these trees around here, to collect enough—"

"Because I doubt that there's more than one or two trees that are ready for tapping. Your navigator can check on the height of these trees by triangulation. There's only one tree that's over two hundred and fifty feet. When they get that tall they begin to manufacture a growth hormone—auxin—in terrific quantities. They begin growing at the rate of a couple feet a day. When they begin to get their surplusage of auxin, they begin to manufacture *keoloo*-latex—that's the raw sap. You mix the latex with sulphuric acid and it turns into pliable rubber."

"Wait a minute." Hall turned to his men—the four members of his crew. "Any of you men know anything about *keoloo* trees?"

There was no answer. Hall said grudgingly, "Okay, Tracer, we'll have to take your word for all this. But I'm warning you if the police catch up with us, you'll die first—and you won't be happy while you're dying. Go on."

Tracer felt sick at the brutal coarseness on Hall's face. He continued, his voice wavering, "I'm telling you the truth. I planted the first *keoloo*s near the cabin. There's the cabin over there. I planted the first seedlings at the rate of one a day. When the *keoloo*s get four hundred feet high, they don't give enough latex to pay, and you have to—ah—chop 'em down. This is a one-man plantation and I don't have enough money to hire people to help me, and one *keoloo* a day is all I can manage alone."

"Okay," Hall rapped out. "You think you're a professor, Tracer? In other words, the *keoloo*-rubber business ain't any snap." He roared, and his men politely guffawed along with him.

Tracer grinned a little sourly. "I'm just giving you the main facts. I've only got one tree I can tap. Besides that, I've only got one gate."

"Gate?"

"A tap, a faucet—a hydrant. It's in the cabin."

"Bring him along to the cabin, men."

JIMMY TRACER was proud of this cabin. He had built it himself out of brushwood. It had a built-in fireplace, and upswinging beds, and good looking furniture. It was cozy and it was warm. He sighed heavily, and went to his tool-chest. He extracted the gate, and Wild Bill Hall plainly showed his suspicions when he rum-

maged around in the chest for another gate.

"You won't find another gate," Jimmy said dolefully. "The sources of technological equipment are all on the inner planets. It costs a fortune to pay the freight charges on tools. I've got a big latex pot in the corner though—brand-new. I figure it'll hold exactly enough latex to coat the gravitonic-power cables. But you'll have to wait until the pot is full before the latex is any good. It gets thicker as it comes down from the top of the tree. This is a standard-size latex pot."

The men, even Hall, were hanging on his every word. They saw before them, a lank, thinly built man with a pinched-up serious face, and slightly red-rimmed eyes. They saw in his mannerisms and in the dreary tone of voice an indication not only that Jimmy realized he was powerless, but that an inner something, the spirit of the man, had died. And they grinned at this. They knew Jimmy's connections with the prisoners they had kidnapped, and they knew what Jimmy's sweetheart was thinking of him for collaborating with them . . . and what the other people were thinking.

Jimmy was urged toward the door of the cabin. He twisted, looked with imploring expression at Hall.

"Listen," he said weakly. "I'm helping you men out of a tight spot, and I think in return you should do me a favor. It's my right. I built this cabin myself and there's a stream of good water running right under it, and I've got a pump in the kitchen. I've even got a water heater. I've got all kinds of canned goods and good canned drinks and I've got liquor—plenty of it over in that cabinet."

Hall's twisted smile flashed. "Liquor!" he exploded.

"Now wait a minute," Jimmy said

hurriedly. "The women in the ship have been crammed in that little cabin of theirs for over half a day. They must feel pretty terrible. I was thinking maybe you could let the women use the cabin, and you men can sleep outdoors—"

"Us sleep outdoors!" Hall chuckled, rocking on the balls of his feet. Then he raised his hand as if to hit Jimmy. "You fool, you think I was born yesterday? Got some sort of a trick in mind, eh? Hell. Remember this: I've stayed on top as long as I have because I don't trust nobody. We'll use the cabin and to hell with your women. Now get along to that *keoloo*-tree!"

Jimmy let his shoulders slump in defeat, but he had to lower his head to hide the shine in his eyes. He led the men outside the cabin. He blinked until he saw the only *keoloo*-tree he could tap. It was about a hundred-fifty feet distant. Jimmy walked with wobbling step straight toward the *keoloo*—a geometrically straight line, a line that *had* to be straight!

Fifteen minutes later, the gate had been forced through the rough outer rind of the *keoloo* and had sunk deep into the pulp interior. The pirates breathed deeply, fascinated, as Jimmy opened the gate and a red, syrupy liquid descended in a thin stream into the latex pot. Above them, the *keoloo* speared to the sky, losing itself.

Wild Bill Hall exulted. He ordered one of his crew to take Jimmy back to the ship. There was a minor argument as the man thus ordered protested.

"Yeah," he flared. "An' while I'm standing guard in the ship you others will be guzzlin' all that liquor down.

Hall said coldly, "Get going. I'll send a relief in six hours. And don't the rest of you men think we're going to spend time getting drunk—not with any police behind us."

JIMMY walked away with his guard behind him. Jimmy walked a little to the left of the cabin, and deliberately blundered into a brambly patch of *karga*-berry bushes. While his ill-humored guard was snarling his curses at Jimmy for being so clumsy, Jimmy tore off whole handfuls of the *karga*-berries and stuffed them in his pockets.

In the ship, Jimmy set his lips, and paid no attention to the hostile stares Bryant and his business associates bent on him. Without a word, he started to work. He was tired of having to justify himself to these men. He first of all took out a pen-knife and hacked away at his own rather long, unkempt black hair. He placed the seven-inch lock carefully on the floor. He took out a handkerchief and cut three or four strips away the length of the handkerchief.

Without realizing it, the men were staring at him in fascination.

J. S. Bryant uneasily cleared his throat, and Jimmy's head shot up.

"Don't ask any questions, Mr. Bryant, because you can go to—" He stopped, eyes blazing. His tone was quieter, but bitter when he resumed. "You've always told me without mincing any words what you thought of a planetary horticulturist. You've never had anything but contempt for me. Don't say you haven't. Well, before this is over, you're going to come to me and you're going to apologize. You'll see. You'll learn a thing or two about planetary horticulturists that your type would never even suspect."

He continued with his work. He doubled the lock of hair over a pencil, letting the ends stick out from the pencil. He used the strips of cloth to bind the hair on the pencil and he had a fairly serviceable brush. Next he took the crystal glass case of his watch. He dropped the *karga*-berries in a pile.

He cracked the *karga*-berries at the seams and a fiery bright blue liquid began to fill up the bowl of the glass-case.

The men were on their feet now, entirely forgetting themselves. Jimmy dipped the brush in the fiery blue liquid and began to paint a blue rectangle four feet deep on the locked door of the cabin. After the rectangle was completed, he lighted a cigarette and walked softly, springily, up and down in the cabin's quiet, his face pale with nervousness. Fifteen minutes passed. Jimmy took his pen-knife, then, scraped along the blue rectangle. A bluish granular substance came away. When he was finished, the borders of the rectangle were perhaps a sixty-fourth of an inch deep.

J. S. Bryant took one look at that, one look at Jimmy, and then quietly dropped to his knees and began to crack *karga*-berries into the watch case.

"I remember this stuff," he said casually, as he worked. "One of the new etching fluids. Amalgamates with metal. Didn't know it grew on Ganymede, though."

"Yes, sir," said Jimmy huskily.

"Here you are, boy," said one of the other men, rather sheepishly handing Tracer the *karga*-juice.

Jimmy painted the rectangle again. He had desperately resolved to let these men eat themselves up with curiosity, but he couldn't keep it in. He had to let them know, part of it, anyway. "It'll take hours to eat away a hole through the door so we can get out. We'll have to fight our guard. But it may be that my other plan will hatch before this one. If only Hall and his men stay in the cabin—if they don't notice what's happening to the *keoloo* tree. In sixteen hours, a few minutes less, if it works out the way I want it to, we won't ever have to worry

about Hall again. I'm worried though. I hoped they'd get drunk, but I don't think they will. We better take our chance to escape here now. Then we have to get close to the cabin to make sure none of them escape when the *keoloo* falls."

J. S. Bryant grudgingly asked no questions. But his eyes twinkled.

"Okay, boy," said Fabenstock softly. "You know what you're up to. You crack the whip." The other men nodded gravely.

LONG hours passed. Jimmy slept once, the others working on the door. Twice he talked with Dorothy. He couldn't tell her what was brewing, because he'd have to talk too loud. But his heart leaped at what she said.

Her voice was miserable. "I'm sorry about all the arguments we had about your—plants, Jimmy, dear. I was going to stay on Callisto and help you, and make up for everything. . . ."

Success came, after seventeen hours. Their guard brought their rations once. He shoved the tray in and backed out, bolding his flare-stick. Later, when the rectangular panel swung away as if on a hinge, Jimmy was the first one through.

He went padding down a corridor, straight toward the control room. They surprised their guard reading a magazine. He was disarmed, gagged, and bound before he knew what was happening. They took his flare-stick, but found no other weapons.

They left the ship, five shadows in Ganymedan darkness, looking toward the brightly lit cabin. Laughter and loud talk came from the cabin, and the clink of glasses. But it was not drunken laughter. Hall was too wise in the game to let his men get out of control.

"We're no match for them," the pudgy man named Fabenstock said

throatily.

"That *keoloo*-tree is, though," Jimmy said savagely. "I expected it to fall before this, but it's liable to go any minute. Look! See how the tree is curving straight toward the cabin? It can't take much of that curvature. It's own weight will break it off near the base. The tree is ten feet in diameter. It'll crush and kill—"

"I can't see the tree curving," Bryant said doubtfully.

"It's curving, all right. It's too dark to see it, I guess."

Jimmy held the flare-stick. He wanted to get closer to the cabin. He crept forward. Jimmy spoke slowly. If anybody escaped the cabin when the tree fell they would have to jump him.

"But I don't see *why* the tree should fall," Fahrenstock wheezed irritably. "And I don't think we should get this close. We're—"

Somebody *ished* him. They moved through the chill air, across the brittly crunching humus—and suddenly Jimmy felt the hair rise on the back of his neck. Whether it was intuition or just a sense of hearing which told him somebody was behind them he would never know. He started to whirl, but a voice lashed out,

"All right, misters—*hands up!*"

Jimmy froze, a terrible incredulity growing in him. That this should happen at the last minute was maddening. He faltered but a gun prodded him agonizingly. His hands wavered upward. He knew now what had happened. This man was the relief guard. He must have seen them leave the ship and had skirted around behind them.

"How'd you birds break out, anyway?" the pirate demanded wonderingly. "Okay, march. Into the cabin. We'll see what the chief has to say about this."

Jimmy would rather have marched

into war than to enter the cabin. Good God, any minute the *keoloo* would go! He couldn't break for it now. That would mean certain death. He forced his terrified brain to think. They couldn't all be in the cabin when the tree fell. Otherwise, what would happen to Dorothy and her mother and their maid?

As they entered the cabin, Jimmy deliberately fell to the rear, letting J. S. Bryant lead the way. The guard's gun prodded against Jimmy's back as Wild Bill Hall looked up from the table around which he and the rest of the crew was gathered. He blinked at J. S. Bryant.

The pirate who held the gun on them explained briefly. Hall rose dangerously. "You boys are resourceful," he admitted. "I guess I'll have to chain you in the ship."

AT THAT moment, Jimmy heard something. A brittle splitting sound. Alone of all the men in the cabin, he knew what that sound meant. The *keoloo* tree has a fairly tough rind of bark around its ponderous, pulpy interior. It was that tough casing alone which was holding the dangerously leaning *keoloo* erect. The splitting sound meant that the *keoloo* had already started to fall.

An eternity seemed to pass after that sound. Jimmy's life paraded before his mind as it does for a man near death. He thought of Dorothy, of Bryant, of the thousands of settlers who might have to wait another quarter of a century for the industrialization of the Saturnian and Jovian Worlds if Bryant died. And Bryant *would* die unless—

Jimmy did not think of himself. He couldn't. This was the time when the individual became *nil*, and the thousand to one chance had to be taken.

There is a certain judo trick wherein

one can sometimes best a man who has a gun sticking in your back. Jimmy pulled it. He turned his body at right angles, so quickly that the gun was pointing at empty air. The gun fired, and the invisible burst of killing light struck a pirate in the throat. Jimmy's right arm swung down, knocking the flare-stick from the man's hand, and bringing Jimmy facing him. Jimmy pushed his face in and tripped him and yelled,

"Make a break for it! *Get out of the cabin!*"

He whirled again, kicked the kitchen table up into the pirates' face just as Hall was about to fire. Everything was wildest confusion. Jimmy shoved one of Bryant's more stupid friends toward the door. The four men tumbled out ahead of Jimmy. All of this could not have taken more than fifteen seconds from the time the *keoloo* tree's bark had split. Jimmy turned around just as Wild Bill Hall framed his massive body in the doorway.

Jimmy looked at him savagely. His booted foot drove square into Wild Bill Hall's stomach. He staggered back into the cabin and Jimmy yelled, "That's for the rubber check!" Jimmy hurled himself from the cabin.

And the *keoloo* fell. Jimmy heard the swishing sound as it cut the air, as it fell, slowly under this lower gravity, but fast enough. The tree fell athwart the cabin. It crushed through the two-by-four joists. The cabin crunched, and snapping boards slung-shot themselves high into the air. The powdered debris of masonry rose in hissing clouds. Walls tumbled inward, and the cabin lay in awful havoc.

No sign of life came from that tumbled heap, no outcry, no movement. And now that the worst was over, Jimmy Tracer's knees wobbled, and he sat down, his body one mass of shaking

nerves. Later, the men went toward the ship, found the keys to the cabin on the person of the one pirate who remained alive, and freed the three women.

Dorothy threw herself sobbing into Jimmy's arms.

"We didn't know *what* had happened to you," she chattered, her face tear-streaked. Jimmy rumbled his hand adoringly through her auburn hair.

"It's all right now. Everything's all right, honey. The police will be along sooner or later, but in the meantime we'll just camp here. And I don't care any more—*a c t u a l l y*—whether your father builds his space-ship factory near Jupiter or near Saturn. It doesn't matter. The main thing is that this neck of the woods is going to be industrialized!"

J. S. BRYANT made a *harrumph*-ing sound. He grasped Jimmy's shoulder looking him square in the eyes.

"I care, Jimmy," he said quietly. "We've already decided on the site for the factory. The others agree with me. We're going to build it in the Jovian System. Matter of fact, ah, seeing as how you seemed to have kept abreast of market trends and already have a *keoloo* plantation laid out—we're going to build it on Ganymede!"

"That is," put in Fahrenstock quickly, hopefully, "if you'll sell us *keoloo*-rubber."

"Well—" said Jimmy.

"We don't know if we will or not," Dorothy Bryant said, looking at her father with hostile eyes. "Some of the things you've said about Jimmy weren't so nice, dad, and I think—"

"All right, dammit!" roared Bryant. "My own daughter always has gone against me. Jimmy, I apologize. I mean that sincerely. I guess I was the sucker, not realizing that you really

knew your onions—and your *harga*-berries and your *keoloo*s—”

He stuck out his hand and Jimmy took it, his eyes shining. “Thanks, dad. We’ll be able to supply you all the *keoloo*-rubber you want.”

“What I want to know,” said Fabenstock, “is how you knew the tree—”

“—was going to fall? I planned it. It was touch and go from the first. On the regular *keoloo* plantations, you leave the gate in one side of the tree for an hour, then put it in the other side. Or you use two gates. But if you leave the gate in one side too long, it means that you’re draining the growth hormone auxin from one side of the tree only. *Keolo*-latex is one half auxin. So one side of the tree grows more than the other, and it begins to curve . . . the *keoloo* grows fast. It fell. And it fell across the cabin because I

walked directly away from the cabin and inserted the gate!

“It isn’t a new principle,” Jimmy said earnestly. “Auxin was discovered in the early twentieth century by Boysen, Jensen, Paál, Thimann, and a bunch of others, and they got much the same effect I did, only on a smaller scale.”

Dorothy captured Jimmy after that and dragged him to a secluded spot, touching his stubbled face. Her eyes shone. “Jimmy,” she whispered, “can we build a house—right here? When we’re married?”

Jimmy took off his glasses. He always felt braver when his eyes were a little blurred. “What do you mean *when*?” he demanded. “Wait till the captain of that police cruiser gets here. With your father’s blessing, we’ll be man and wife before we leave this planet!”

ECHOES OF EMPIRE

By JACK SHERIDAN

*“Behold our progress!” the Assyrian cried, viewing
the blazing sky,
The lofty towers, the walls of sun-baked brick, the brazen gates,
the ponderous ramparts high,
The roll of chariots in the narrow ways, the glittering crowd close
thronging mart and street,
The gleaming flash of spears beneath the sun, the shaking tread of
conquering legions’ feet.*

*“Behold our progress and enlightenment! We are the people!
We shall surely stand.”*

—AND SPEAKING THUS THEY PASSED.

*The moon shines cold above the desert sands,
The thin winds whimper lone across the waste;
The shifting dunes long since have rolled and closed
Above dead cities ages-long effaced.
The monuments and towers are overthrown,
The tablets moulder in the sword blade’s rust,
And all the glory that the past has known
Has crumbled, like the builders—into dust.*

*“Behold our progress!” Hear proud Egypt’s boast: temples and
pyramids and painted stone;
Column on column reared beside the Nile; throughout the world
for wealth and science known;*

ECHOES OF EMPIRE

*Rich galleys clustering on the river's flood; learning and wisdom
sheltered in the halls;
Vast monuments of power on every hand; ranked gods of stone and
massive sculptured walls.
"Behold our progress and enlightenment! We are the people!
We shall surely stand."*

—AND SPEAKING THUS THEY PASSED.

*The jackal whines among the fallen stones,
The painted tombs no longer guard their dead,
The desert winds disport with mummy dust,
The gods are fallen and their glory fled.
The bats at even flitter forth from holes
Wherein aged shreds of human clay are thrust.
The silken sails and gilded galley poles
Have crumbled, like the builders—into dust.*

*"Behold our progress!" Hear the tramp of Rome; legion on legion
on the stone paved ways.
Clatter of chariots; tread of marching feet; standards ablaze be-
neath the morning rays;
Mistress of all the world, from pine to palm, art and adornment
plucked from every land;
Monarchs in chains behind her chariot wheels; States that pay
tribute to a conqueror's hand.
"Behold our progress and enlightenment! We are the people!
We shall surely stand."*

—AND SPEAKING THUS THEY PASSED.

*The broken pillars in the Forum lie,
And shattered fragments strew the Circus floor.
The loathsome beggars gather in the shade
Of walls whose echoes legions wake no more.
The brazen bucklers turn no foeman's steel,
The short, keen sword no longer makes its thrust
And all the Empire that hailed Caesar lord
Has crumbled, like its builders—into dust.*

*"Behold our progress!" Emperor, King and Czar; navies for aung
and battle flags unfurled;
Europe a checkerboard of blood and flame; their legions mustering
throughout the world.
Hear once again, while red the ruin roars, the puny voices shout-
ing each to each.
Each on the other shouldering the blame; hear once again the weary,
age old speech.
"Behold our progress and enlightenment! We are the people!
We shall surely stand."*

—AND AS THEY SPEAK THEY PASS.

*The dreadnoughts fade beneath the ocean's swell
The cities flame; the fields are black with dead.
The highways shake beneath the tread of hosts
Pouring to meet the flame-shot storm of lead.
Women, sad-eyed, the hushing hamlets fill;
The needy seek in vain starvation's crust;
And all the gain of hard-wrought centuries
Is crumbling, with its builders—into dust.*

GREAT GODS AND

It was an incredible world where size didn't mean a thing—because it was all so mixed up. An ant might be almost godlike.



With clashing mandibles the giant insects came rushing forward, bent on nothing short of murder

SHRINKY and I were strolling through the zoo when she noticed the life and death struggle at our feet.

"Look at them fight!" she said. "Isn't that dreadful? Someone's going to get killed. 'Spando! Don't just stand there. *Do something!*'"

"Why not let them fight it out?" I said.

"Why, you heartless thing. Suppose the little black one gets his head bitten off?" Shrinky wailed.

"It'll teach him not to pick on monsters ten times his size," I said. "Any little black ant ought to have better

LITTLE TERMITES

by DON WILCOX



sense than to pick on a worm that big . . . By George, they *are* an even match, at that!"

"I wonder which one *ought* to win," Shirky said, and the serious look in her pretty face was too much for me.

"All right, dear," I said. "I'll reduce myself in size and crawl through the fence and pick up a worm's eye view of this fracas. It'll only take a few minutes. You wait right here—"

"If you're going to shrink, I'm going to, too," Shrinky said. So we both gritted our teeth and began to *shrink*. *We shrank, clothes and all, until we were as small as thimbles.*

We rolled through the steel fence to stand within three inches of this furious little slug-fest. Believe me, that little inky monster—a black *ant* to you—was hurling a mean belly-punch. *Thump, thump, thump, slug!* The big puffy green squirmer—*worm* to you—whirled and coiled and writhed in pain. He was scrapping for dear life, what there was left of it.

"Do something!" Shrinky squealed in her pipsqueak voice.

"Not till I shrink some more," I said. So I shrank some more . . .

IF YOU want to know how we got that way—Sbrinky and I—you're welcome to look up our case histories in any up-to-date library. Consult Volume 25 of the 25th century Anatomical Laboratories, Inc., and you'll get the whole history of the flexible hormone theory. You'll find that Sbrinky and I are the first successful experiments in this line. The doctors were considerate, you'll observe, in applying their miracles to the two of us, rather than to me alone. You see, whether a fellow's as big as an elephant or as tiny as a candle, he still appreciates companionship.

Of course you've seen those outland-

ish pictures of us in the science supplements of the newspapers. The ones taken on our wedding day were reprinted in the encyclopedia yearbooks.

Remember the one of me standing fifteen feet tall, smiling down at Shrinky? She was just two inches high, coquetting up at me from under the cuff of my trousers.

"Can this be love?" the caption read.

Beside it was the other picture with our dimensions reversed. I was two inches tall, and Shrinky was all of twelve feet. I stood on the back of her hand, and the caption had her saying, "Isn't Expando a little dear?"

Now, many people still think that this was trick photography. But anyone who has seen us in our vaudeville act knows better. We can, and do, change our sizes. We can change as easily as a chameleon seems to change his colors. It's almost as natural with us as eating or sleeping.

The one deceptive thing about those pictures was that they gave the impression we are usually of very different sizes—that when one of us is a giant the other is likely to be a Tom Thumb. Very rarely is this the case. Except during our vaudeville stunts, we are nearly always matched for size.

Why?

Because Shrinky is a very gracious wife, and she adapts herself quickly. A very lovely and agreeable kid. The moment she finds me making a change she follows suit.

"How does it feel to be able to change your size?" people are forever asking us.

"Very convenient," Shrinky will say with a twinkle. "For instance, if Expando and I become embarrassed at a party, we can literally grow small and hide under the rug."

And that's no exaggeration. Fact is, we can shrink down to pin-point caliber.

Maybe smaller. But we don't often try. Shrinko gets nervous. So do the onlookers. For example, back stage, before our first vaudeville performance, we gave a little demonstration for the stage hands. And you should have seen that colored janitor's eyes bug out. We'd only shrunk to football size when he began to wave his arms.

"Boy, you-all sure can *shortify*," he said, showing his white teeth in a nervous grin. "Jis' be sure you-all don' forgit how to *spandify*!"

Well the master of ceremonies had been scraping to think up a stage name for us, and he seized on that colored janitor's word. He told the story to our first audience, and we've been Mr. and Mrs. "Spandify" ever since.

Soon after this unique ability came into our possession, we began to recognize little changes in our characters. Already, we differ from you in a number of ways, no doubt. And one of the important differences is this new interest we take in the *smaller forms of life* about us. We feel a concern for their struggles.

And that brings me back to this life-and-death combat in the zoo, just inside the big steel fence marked *PACHYDERMS*

CHAPTER II

Knockout Drops

I JUMPED around like a referee at a prize fight.

The battle royal could easily have involved all four of us if Shrinky and I hadn't been nimble. Here they came, rolling, jumping, slugging and biting. The big green squirmer flung himself into a figure 5 and snapped out like an exclamation mark. His crusty green mandibles caught the inky monster by a leg and nipped some hairs off.

The inky monster leaped over him—and caught sight of us. For an instant he ducked low like a car caught by a stop-light. He was almost as big as a car to me. In comparison to my reduced body, his head was a shiny black barrel with steel jaws. His long, stocky, elbowed antennae jerked back. The holes in the ends of those black antennae had a sensitive look, like the ends of elephants' trunks.

"He *smells* you!" Shrinky cried. "Come back!"

Those antennae vibrated, and I knew Shrinky was right. He did smell me. I could take that as an insult if I wanted to. It made no difference to him. He had spied me, and here he came like an armored truck of death. For some foolish reason, I had reduced myself to less than half his size. In a fight I would be no match for him and I knew it.

"Expand! Expand!" Shrinky squealed. "Oh! He's going to bite! Look out! *Run! Run!*"

I tried to run. It was like trying to outrun a nightmare. This fellow was used to hard, bumpy surfaces. Beneath my feet was the floor of concrete which formed the base of the steel fence. To one of my size it was a series of boulders and sandpiles. But I ran, jumped, and hurdled rocky obstructions, and suddenly—

Spat! A raindrop struck directly in his path. For just an instant it disconcerted him. Just time for me to double my fists tight enough to start expanding. Was Shrinky expanding too? "Shrinky! Shrinky! Where are you?" I shouted.

My rapid swelling had a wonderful effect upon the inky monster coming at me. My voice, too, made him thoughtful. Two more raindrops spat down between us. I concentrated on clenching my fists as hard as I could, to hurry my expansion. My scare didn't dimin-

ish as my size increased—not according to the perspiration that dripped from my forehead.

But in a moment I was as large as a young frog. That did it. The black monster wouldn't have hesitated to battle a young tadpole, or maybe a baby mouse. But there were limits to his foolhardy nerve. His steps came slower. On top of a crest of concrete he paused. His eyes opened wider. His jaws closed. His antennae drew back.

Abruptly he whirled around and raced away.

I mopped my wet brow. The blood began to circulate through my plum-sized body once again.

"Shrinky! Shrinky!" Where had she gone? "Shrinky! Come on, we're getting out of this."

I don't mind saying I was sore. I was already formulating a bit of unpleasant conversation for her benefit. It had been her idea, to come down to this concrete and play god to these little bestial monsters. All right, we'd faced them. But far from seeing that justice was done we had only postponed their fight. Already the bristling black ant was on his way back for another go at the big puffy green worm.

"Shrinky!" I kept shouting. The heck of it was, I didn't know what size Shrinky I was looking for. She might have shrunk too small to be seen. On the other hand, she might have returned to normal already. (She had spoken of staying large to keep watch for any elephants in this pen who might chance to stray along the fence.) I glanced upward. All I could see was the high steel fence towering toward the gray misty sky. The raindrops were bouncing around me. When a man is no bigger than a hen egg, a few raindrops make an awful impression. If Shrinky were out in this—

I saw her, now. She lay almost

directly beneath the steel of the fence. She lay as if asleep. She was still quite small—no larger than a jelly bean. Her white skirt was twisted in disarray.

Near her was the big puffy green squirmer, fully three times her size. Its head was less than an inch away from her body. Whether it had already struck her I couldn't tell. Its big green jaws gaped open. I saw the glistening wetness of its mouth. How much poison was in that liquid?

The puffy green worm lifted its head like the end of a crawling question mark. It was poised to strike.

I must have shouted like a fire alarm in that moment. I must have bounded like a bolt of lightning. I ran with clenched fists. I expanded as I ran, and my rapid-fire steps widened.

Shrinky didn't answer me. She didn't move. The big green ugly head arched downward. In that instant I caught the vision of certain death.

CHAPTER III

Dungeons of Black Earth

A COUPLE of slashing raindrops played me in luck. They smacked the monster-creeper across its blunt nose. It drew its head back. For a split second it was stymied. Raindrops were under some of its hundred feet, and it skidded like a cat running too fast to turn the corner. In that split second I pounced.

I grabbed both hands around its cold, spongy neck and swung it like a sack of flour. It rolled and went into a spasm of jerking. But the advantage of its size and weight was mine. I jerked it off its hundred feet, I whirled it, threw it. It sailed over Shrinky's head, caught on the low bar of the steel fence. It hung there, stunned. Its big greenish purple eyes spun with

color like whirling marbles.

"Shrinky! Shrinky!" I was wild, desperate. The poor little thing, still less than half the size of an ant, lying there like dead . . . She was breathing softly. I gathered her up in my arms. I hurried off with her toward the other side of the fence—and that just goes to show how your human-sized habits will keep a grip on you. The enemies that had assailed us were no respecters of such large fences as this big steel elephant fence.

So, on second thought, I took refuge beneath the fence, for the raindrops were coming down fast now. I paused directly under the bar of steel, so that Shrinky was sheltered, lying limp in my arms.

I must have been still breathing hard from the fight. For Shrinky opened her eyes looked up at me, and shook her head groggily. Then she whispered tensely, "What is the matter, Espando? Did they—did they get you?"

"Not me. You."

"Not me," she said, trying to smile away the terror that must have been in my eyes. "All that got me was a raindrop. How it smacked me! Guess I'm just a sissy, but it sure gave me an awful jar."

"Let's get out of here," I said.

But at the moment I didn't see the inky-black ant that had started all this trouble. In fact, I saw no ants. So we hesitated and caught our breath. It wasn't a comfortable thought to be emerging from our tiny size to full stature in the midst of a solid rain. I shrank down to Shrinky's size, just to be congenial, and we stuck to our shelter.

NOW the wounded green crawler slipped, kerplow! to the bumpy concrete a few lengths away from us. It lay there, its fat body throbbing with

pain. I thought it best to keep Shrinky's eyes away from the sight, but she turned and stared. Her face lighted with a strange mixture of terror and pity.

"Oh, 'Spando! What happened?"

"That big boy ran into some trouble," I said sarcastically. "If the black monster comes back for him, he'll be a pushover. In fact, I think he'll die."

"Then you—you took sides, Espando! You did it!" Her little body stiffened with anger. "You've already played god and settled the fight. Oh, 'Spando!"

I tried to get a word in edgewise, but poor little Shrinky was in tears. She was sure I had acted impulsively. How could I know I hadn't struck out against an innocent life?

I shook her and made her listen to me. "Shrinky, dear, that creature was all set to take a bite out of your pretty face when I grabbed it. Is that any way for an innocent life to behave toward its god?"

This terrifying revelation was too much for her and she buried her sohs against my shoulder.

"There, there. You just forget it. I've got you right here in my arms—"

But I didn't have. If there's anything that takes the wind out of a fellow's sails it's to be caught off guard just when he's cooing to his lady-love that he's her big strong hero. I was caught off guard. The roar of rain, and the screen of spraying drops all around us, gave that inky monster all the sound and smoke screen he needed to slip up on us. Something thudded against the small of my back like an oversize baseball bat. Shrinky flew out of my hands and went sprawling. Her little yellow blouse and white skirt caught a spray of muddy raindrops as she fell.

The inky monster was on me, kick-

ing and slapping like an iron-clad grizzly bear. Three awful wallops got me across the back before I could recover my balance. Believe me, that ant was fast and treacherous. His legs were more like metal and leather than flesh. I was only flesh—god-flesh! In that terrifying moment, with poor Shrinky wailing for help, and myself facing death, I could have sold all my god-playing talents for a pair of wings, and never quibbled over the price. In my reduced state, that inky monster could walk over me as easy as a milk horse over a traffic button.

He walked into me, like a prize fighter going after a midget opponent. But this time he didn't strike me. He grabbed me. He grabbed Shrinky. He carried us off through the rain.

ON THE way to the ant hill Shrinky stopped crying twice. The first time was when she saw two other black ants standing alongside our path, staring. She must have seen what I saw—that they opened their eyes with a look of amazed respect. But not for us—oh, no. For the black ant that was carrying us, and for his scars of battle.

They might have been saying, "Look at Tuffy. He must have been in one devil of a scrap. Look at that left front leg with half the hairs ripped off. Well, anyway, he's bringing home some dinner. The queen will like that."

Whether or not they actually said any such thing, it was plain enough that they were taking in a situation which could have been summed up in those words. For we were on our way to the depths, and again Shrinky was crying like a spanked baby.

Then her howling stopped for the second time, just after we came to the end of that long path covered with rain-slapped grass blades. Now we

were on a small hillock of little rocks—sand and dirt to you. From this ant hill vantage point we caught our last view of the wider world before we were carted down into the earthen dungeons. What Shrinky saw was an elephant.

That was a sight I'll never forget. I never saw an elephant that didn't look pretty big; but when you're reduced to less than the size of an ant, well, the little boy wasn't exaggerating when he said it was a hellova big elephant. Shrinky and I both saw it. We both saw that it liked the rain and had concluded that this would be nice weather to take a stroll along the fence. It was sauntering toward us.

Then we went down. Down through spirals, curves and coils. Down through the passages full of strange odors that were more than soft dry earth. Passages that grew so black that Shrinky kept whispering to me to be sure I was still there.

CHAPTER IV

Favors for the Queen

"THERE'S the queen," Shrinky said, nudging me quietly.

"How do you know?"

"Because she's the largest. And you can tell by the way she's looking us over, wondering how we'll taste."

"I thought the queen was supposed to have wings." I was sure that Shrinky would know about such things, and the more I could keep her mind on them, the less she'd think about the dangers.

For my part, I was in a whirl. These ants were surrounding us by the thousands, from the sounds of scratching feet along these black paths. And they could brush past us and scrape our torn legs with the tough, saw-like hairs on their legs, without ever bother-

ing to inquire whether we were gods, on humans, or snails. If our godlike ideals hadn't been thoroughly punctured by this time, nothing more than this was needed to lay us low.

Shrinky was squeezing my hand when our captor, "Tuffy," pushed us back into the corner. We could still see the queen, and as we became more accustomed to the nearly total darkness, our eyes succeeded in making out the form and contour of this earthen chamber. Some of the tiny rocks glowed with a dull light, and against this background we could see the forms of many ants parading back and forth.

The queen presided over this turmoil. She was three or four times as large as some of the underdeveloped members of the colony. According to Shrinky, she lived and grew fat by virtue of their work, and when she felt like it she would lay another batch of eggs and hatch out another family of workers.

"But she'll always stay right here," Shrinky said. "She has torn off her wings because she doesn't need them any more. You know how married life is; the wife is supposed to quit fluttering around, and the husband is supposed to see that she has a comfortable home, and gets plenty of delicacies to eat—"

"Such as us."

"And has plenty of maids to work for her, and plenty of cows to furnish milk for the whole household—"

"Cows?"

"Ants do have them, the aphids, you know. They need them, with such large families. But they need other food, too, and that's probably why Tuffy picked on the big green worm."

It was interesting to watch the comings and goings of these tunnel dwellers, and to speculate upon their plans for us. It became a game with us to watch

our chance to expand ourselves in size. We crowded as far out of sight as we could, not to be discovered in this process. For I had not forgotten that my impressive size had once caused Tuffy to turn tail and run.

AS WE expanded ever so carefully, we began to damage some of the tunnels overhead. Seven or eight officious ant guards came around to see what was the matter. They crept close and one of them gave me a push in the stomach. He tried to reach the top of my head, but this required him to crawl up on my shoulder.

"We're as big as olives," Shrinky whispered. "They don't like it."

"No one likes olives at first."

"They're pounding me on the head. What shall I do?"

"Grah them. Squeeze the life out of a few of the devils. We're not taking any torture off these little brutes," I snapped. "And if that queen gets too arrogant—"

"We're not in danger, are we, Spando? There aren't enough of them to—"

"Of course not. As long as we keep our size."

Shrinky threw off the inky monsters that were crowding her, and they fell back, somewhat dismayed over finding so large a captive. They began to run around in circles, apparently passing the excitement along the line.

Shrinky's hand was trembling against my arm, and again I tried to assure her that we were in no real danger. But we both knew what neither of us admitted aloud. As long as that heavy thump-thump-thump kept jarring the earth we were in plenty of peril. That elephant was stamping around close over our heads.

If our bodies grew much larger his foot could crush us like eggs. If we

got much smaller, the ants could mob us. At present we were trapped, and the best we could do was to remain no larger than olives.

Now the swarming denizens of this underground chamber arranged themselves more or less like an audience assembled for a concert or a public speech. The queen was the mistress of ceremonies, and did she do some fancy prancing back and forth in front of her public!

"I don't like her," Shrinky whispered. "She puts on too many airs."

"She's got a chorus of boy friends there that are running her a close second. Look at 'em strut. They must be prime ministers or something."

When the little group of swaggering males took their places like statues around the queen, she gave some sort of signal, and who should step out in the center but our own scrappy, hard-bitten Tuffy!

"They're doing honors for Tuffy!" Shrinky whispered. "He must have won some competition for bravery."

"He conquered us," I whispered. "Look out, something's going to happen."

"What do you mean?"

"I think he's going to present us to the queen for her dinner."

"But he can't do that," Shrinky objected. "We're gods. We won't stand for it. How can we come down here and do them good turns if they eat us?"

"A chance to eat us is the only good turn they want. But they've got a surprise coming, Shrinky. When that tough boy captured us we were small. Now we're fifty times his size. He's gonna have trouble making his story stick."

AND that was exactly what happened. You could see it in their

gestures. A dozen of those jealous prime ministers stood back stiffly, waiting to see what sort of prisoners Tuffy would bring forth.

At the same time they carried on a sly play of signals to the hundreds of worker ants that made up the surrounding audience. As if to say, "Keep your eyes on Tuffy, boys. He thinks *he's* going to gain the favor of the queen that belongs to us. But just wait. If she doesn't like what he's got to offer, she'll probably bite his head off. And we'll help her."

Well, Tuffy called us out and we scraped our heads along the dirt ceilings, and piled the dirt back of us with our hands to make room for ourselves in the tight little chamber. Tuffy looked at us, from the legs up, and he almost fell over.

Then he looked back at the row of mockers and scorners, and suddenly he stiffened. He was going to stick by his bluff. He swaggered, and tossed his head, and beat his front feet on the floor and bounced around, all as if to say, "There they are, your majesty. I captured them single handed."

If ever I saw twelve ants laugh and make sport, that was the moment. They jumped over each other and went through mock scuffles, sparring and beating and biting. Then the queen made some sort of signal that brought everybody to attention again.

Tuffy was on the spot, all right. Those twelve prime ministers were all ready to jump on him. They snapped at his feet. They kicked at him. One of them tried to push him over.

And poor Tuffy didn't even feel it. He was just standing there, staring at us, completely dazed. He knew darned well he had captured us, and yet, from our immense size, he knew darned well it was impossible.

The queen was urging him to demon-

strate. His honesty and honor were at stake, and it was all too plain that in another minute or two this gang of scoffers would tear him limb from limb. He was an inky monster, a savage ant, a ruthless fighter with more nerve than sense; but I confess that I felt sorry for him, caught in a jam like that."

"Expando, we've got to shrink," Shrinky whispered tensely. "We've got to. We can't let him take this rap on our account."

CHAPTER V

Shrinky Over-Shrinks!

WHAT a man won't do for a weeping woman! Yes, he'll even destroy himself. That's how it has been, all down through the ages; and I suspect it would be true whether humans were as large as elephants or small enough for ant sandwiches.

The doughty little Tuffy waded into his task. He was supposed to show those skeptics exactly how he outfought us, and he did it. He struck at us, and we pretended to weaken at the knees. At the same time we gritted our teeth and made ourselves smaller, just as rapidly as we could.

Now we began to feel the impact of his rough stuff in earnest, and it was no joke. I called to Shrinky to get herself back in the corner while I stood him off. She did it. I could hear her shouting at me, "Fight 'im, 'Spando. Hold your own. Don't get any smaller. Keep him back."

While I fought I had to be careful not to grit my teeth. I didn't want to get any smaller and lose what little advantage I had left. All I wanted was to let that audience of ants know that their heroic little Tuffy had told the truth, and that he did deserve the honors of the queen and her band.

But with sickening heart I suddenly realized that Shrinky's voice was growing smaller and smaller. She must be still gritting her teeth, the way she always tended to do when I was in danger.

"Not too small, Shrinky," I cried.

I didn't hear an answer. All I heard was the curious little clucks of amazement from these ant onlookers. With their own eyes they were seeing their hero *deflate* me. They saw him bring me down from giant size, apparently by sheer fighting nerve. What a hero that would make him!

Yes, I was playing god by giving in to him. And yet—ironically—what a false impression my miracle would give the younger generations of heroes, who would, in turn, try to conquer beasts a hundred times their size! No, this wouldn't happen again. Tuffy would become a legend.

I'll never know what might have happened. I had had my share of scrapping. I was taking too much punishment—more than any god to insects should be forced to take. So I tightened by fists and began to expand, calling to Shrinky.

With the suddenness of an explosion it happened. *The whole top of the ant hill blew off!*

I ROLLED like a marble, just in time to escape being drawn up into the snuffing trunk of a helluva big elephant!

As quick as you could snap your fingers I had ceased fighting an ant and was fighting an elephant. And I was *ill* prepared for the change.

It was Shrinky's disappearance that made the whole ordeal so terrifying. I shouted my lungs out for her. The ants were chasing around in mad thousands, trying to get under cover. The gentle old pachyderm was sniffing at them, and

he spotted me as something larger and stranger than the little creatures he was disturbing.

I ran out of his path. He plodded along and stepped squarely upon the ruins of the ant hill.

"Shrinky! Shrinky!" Why had I ever allowed her to come down to this world of little beasts? How would I ever find her little crushed body in these ruins? And she had come here to play god, to be the sympathetic goddess of justice!

All her happy thoughts had gone astray. One step, one snort from a ruthless god many times her size had shattered all our good intentions.

Amid these ponderings I found myself clinging to the elephant's trunk, climbing to its ear, holding onto the short hairs to keep from falling. With my free hand I was beating it, trying to drive it away from the ant hill. My fists were clenched, I was throwing larger, larger, larger.

Then, before I could slip back to the ground and elude the human eyes that caught me from the zoo promenade, the officers of the law took possession of me. What did I mean by getting into that pen with the elephants? Trespassing of this sort was something for the courts to deal with.

I rode away in a paddy wagon, and they tell me I fought all the way, and that I raved like a mad man, and that I kept calling for Shrinky.

In the cell I calmed down. I would slip out, as soon as all was quiet. I would go back. I would search that scene of ruin and desolation. I had remembered seeing one of the ants crushed among the stones. If Shrinky could be found—

I shook the dirt from my clothes. I washed my dusty hands and face. I started to pace the cell floor. My shoes were full of dirt. A pebble was stick-

ing my foot. I removed the shoe—

And the pebble was Shrinky!

Her clothes were bedraggled, but her face was smiling up at me triumphantly. Her tiny voice was the warmest greeting I ever expect to hear from such dainty little lips.

"Spando! I thought I would suffocate before you'd let me out. Can't you tell when your foot hurts. I struck you, and scratched, and even bit!"

"And all the time I couldn't feel it because I was thinking of you!" Then we were both laughing.

I reduced myself, and together we crawled through the bars and walked out past the sleeping guard. Then we restored ourselves to size and wended our way slowly back to the zoo and looked down at what had once been an industrious ant colony.

"We tried to be just and fair, didn't we?" Shrinky was a bit disconsolate.

"Shrinky, I'm afraid I stepped on one of those ants. See, by that stone. It happened when the elephant was crowding me—"

"Yes, Expando. I saw it happen, just before I jumped into your shoe."

"Was it—was it any of the ants we knew?"

Shrinky glanced up at me and turned her eyes away without answering.

"I'll hope," I said, "that the gods of luck guided me when I took that step. I hope it was one of those arrogant prime ministers. Some of those trouble makers deserved to die."

"I know who it was," she said, and her voice was almost reverent. It's curious, what funny little sentiments will get a grip on a person who has the gift of being able to grow large or small.

"Was it the queen? One of the twelve big shots? Was it Tuffy?"

"I'll never tell," said Shrinky, and she never has.

EXPLORER OF THE STARS

LESLIE C. PELTIER is not a very successful farmer. How could he be? For most of his life has been spent in star-gazing, instead of tending to his crops. But if Peltier is not the world's greatest farmer, at least he claims the distinction of being the world's greatest amateur astronomer. Peltier has probably recorded more observations of the mysterious variable stars than any other living man. He has discovered one new star never before charted by man. And, he has been the discoverer or co-discoverer of seven comets.

A Christmas present, at the age of sixteen, of an astronomy book first revealed the wonders of the heavens to the Ohio farm boy. He could hardly wait to finish the book, so eager was he to try out his new-found knowledge. Night after night, while the other lads sought out the neighboring belles, Leslie would go out into an open field and stare at the stars, matching the constellations in the sky with those from the chart in the book. Even this did not satisfy him. He wrote to the author of the astronomy book, and was told that if he would acquire a telescope he might become an observer of variable stars.

The cheapest telescope Leslie could buy cost \$18,

a fabulous sum to the farm boy. Impatiently, Leslie waited until summer. When the strawberry season came, he earned it by picking 900 quarts at two cents a quart.

Peltier called the night his telescope arrived as the greatest of his life. In the years that followed, he besieged the Harvard Observatory with records made with his fence-post telescope. He was rewarded by the loan of a four-inch telescope.

On a bitterly cold night in November, 1925, he discovered his first comet. Ensuing comet discoveries made in 1930, 1932, and 1933, brought him fame and an even finer instrument especially designed for comet hunting. In 1936, he discovered his new star, Nova Lacertae, listed as one of the 5000 bright stars of the firmament. On May 15 of the same year he discovered his greatest comet, the largest to be seen since Halley's Comet in 1910. For this, he was given an Award of Merit bestowed upon only two other men. Summoned to Harvard, he was feted and proclaimed as one of the world's most distinguished astronomers. Though this modest Ohio farm boy never finished high school, his name will live long after that of most of the great men of our time.

—Peter S. Whitehead.

MADMAN'S PROPHECY

MOST notorious of all the villains in history, the Roman Emperor Caligula is noted for his mad ways. One of the greatest of his cruel escapades is the story of how he set out to explode a prophecy.

As a young boy, Caligula was told by a fortune teller that he could no more become emperor than he could ride a horse across the Bay of Naples. Having proved the first part of the prophecy a lie, the mad Emperor vowed that he would prove the second part a lie as well. He issued an order to harbor masters throughout Italy and Sicily to detain all large vessels, put their cargoes in bond and send them under convoy of war ships to the Bay of Naples. In addition, he had 1000 ships built for the occasion. Then he had them anchored across the bay, prows outward and sterns interlocked, in a double line from the docks of Puteoli to his villa at Baull. When it was found that the sterns stuck up too high for his purpose, he had them trimmed flat, sawing off the helmsman's seat and the figurehead from each.

Fantastic as it seems, at the whim of the mad emperor, the ships were boarded over, and earth was thrown on the boards, forming a broad, firm road, some five and one half miles long. Caligula was still not content. He had a row of shops built all the way across the bridge of boats, and ordered them to be well-stocked and staffed within

ten days, in preparation for the celebration he planned when he would defy the prophecy by crossing the Bay of Naples.

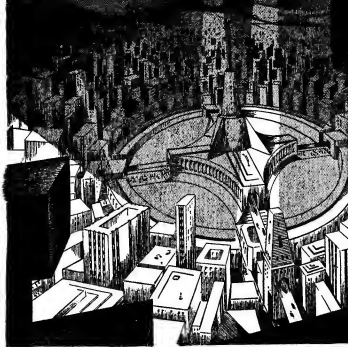
Finally, the awaited day was at hand. Caligula donned a purple silk cloak stiff with jewel-encrusted embroidery, and crowned himself with a garland of oak leaves. After making peace with his gods, by sacrifice, that they might not be jealous of the power he had, he mounted his horse and began trotting across the bridge. The whole of his cavalry was behind him, and in the rear came a force of cavalry especially imported for the occasion from France. As he approached the other end of his bridge of ships, he made his trumpeters blow the charge and dashed into the city as if he were pursuing an enemy.

When the two days of violent entertainment following the spectacle were over, the Treasury had been drained completely dry. But this was not the end of Caligula's folly. Instead of returning the ships to their masters, he returned to Rome, and turned his attention to other matters. A furious storm blew up, and 1000 ships were sunk, 2000 being damaged, causing a grave food shortage in Rome.

So ended one of the most impressive spectacles the world had ever seen, all begun because of the egotistical whim of one of history's most evil men.

William R. Montgomery

DOUBLE For DESTINY





"Look down there. Destiny's city—what will it be like when — it happens?"

by
LEROY YERXA

**When Fate doesn't work out
the way it should, maybe a Double
can be introduced in its place . . .**

BOB WALKER slammed the phone down with a force that threatened to destroy it. He stared at the instrument as though it, personally, were responsible for his misfortune.

"So, you won't pay?" The expression on his boyish face, bordered on the melodramatic. "Well, Mr. McGillicuddy, you are going to pay, and through the nose."

He stalked through the small living

room into a tiny, cluttered kitchen. The breakfast dishes were stacked defiantly in the sink as though daring anyone to wash them. The plain, metal topped table was cluttered with crumbs, a bread knife covered with peanut butter and the remains of a loaf of bread. Bob Walker sat down, adjusted his feet comfortably under the table and clutched the knife firmly in one hand. He found a single slice of bread in the wax wrapper and started to spread peanut butter on it. Every gesture of the knife seemed murderous.

He took an experimental bite of the combination, sniffed in a satisfied manner and discarded the knife. With his free hand, he brushed crumbs from the table and drew from his pocket a carefully folded letter.

Spreading the letter out on the clean portion of the table, he started to read aloud. This was the tenth reading, and he had learned where every inflection of sarcasm could be placed to the best advantage.

"Dear Walker,"—"The rat hadn't even called him *Mr. Walker*—"No one is more sorry than I that your car was scratched in our recent accident."

Scratched, Walker thought. The car needed a new fender; and fenders cost money—folding money.

"However, as the damage to both cars was slight, I don't believe this would be a case for court. I cannot see my way clear to pay you the demanded sum of twenty-five dollars. To put it bluntly, you will not intimidate me into paying you a single cent.

Yours truly,
J. H. McGillicuddy."

The half-consumed sandwich dropped from Bob Walker's fingers. He sprang to his feet so suddenly that the chair tipped behind him and hit the floor with a crash.

"Mr. J. H. McGillicuddy," he spoke

in a loud, oratorical style as though he were addressing the Elks or the Masons at a yearly banquet, "you've reached your verdict. *Now I've reached mine.*"

He strode back into the living room, took the phone book from its place beneath the table and flopped into the nearest chair. Opening it with a speed that indicated a Man Whose Time is Valuable, he thumbed his way down through the classified section.

"J-K-L-Law-Lawyers." His cheeks flushed unpleasantly. "He asked for it, the bum."

He studied the pages of listed lawyers for some time. Then, with a completely baffled expression, closed his eyes, brought his index finger down at random and read the name at the tip of his fingernail.

"Herbert Sells—Criminal Lawyer." At that moment McGillicuddy seemed to be a criminal of the worst type. This guy Sells would give him the works. Look out McGillicuddy, here we come.

Mentally, a shrewd combination of Nero Wolfe and Perry Mason, Walker donned his hat, jotted down Herbert Sells' office address and turned the key on the outside of the apartment door.

Damn the dishes. They'd have to wait. Bob Walker was off to collect twenty-five bucks and see that justice was done.

CHAPTER II

The Face in the Fog

HERBERT SELLS seemed to be an important man, Bob Walker thought. He spent an uncomfortable half-hour twitching uneasily in the huge, meticulously furnished waiting room. To make the delay even more uncomfortable, the polished bit of perfume and perfection who decorated the switchboard had evidently decided to

make a life time habit of staring at him every time she thought he wasn't aware of her presence.

It developed into a game of hide-and-seek, with Walker wishing he had chosen a better place to hide. At last, unable to stand it any longer, he stared straight at her. She stared back for a moment, then returned her gaze to the more immediate work at hand.

"Pardon me," he asked, "do I remind you of some long-lost worm? Perhaps something you expect to find under a stone?"

The remark promoted a prolonged blush.

"I'm—sorry. You'll pardon me? You remind me of someone I know very well. One of our clients. The resemblance was so startling that I couldn't help wondering . . ."

"If I'm a twin? I'm a bachelor, twenty-five, free I hope, and I just want to see Mr. Sells. Is he in conference or has he slipped out the back way to a pin-ball game?"

The speech rewarded him with a completely frozen silence. He watched her shoulders stiffen abruptly and realized that although she had an attractive back, it prevented further conversation.

Several minutes passed before she again surveyed him coolly.

"Mr. Sells will see you now. Go directly in." A slight pause, then; "I'll bet you want him to foreclose a mortgage on your dear old grandmother."

There was big business to be discussed and Walker's full attention returned to the problem at hand. There would be dire revenge for the man who had destroyed his car. Well, anyhow, the fender.

* * *

Herbert Sells' office was a symphony in pale blue with Swedish moderne furniture and chrome fittings. Walker, standing in the opened door, gasped

slightly at the setting and wondered for the first time if he had chosen the right lawyer.

Sells didn't acknowledge Walker's presence at once, but remained with his head over a sheaf of papers, a slim panatella cigar gripped firmly in the corner of his mouth.

"Your secretary told me I could come in," Bob Walker said awkwardly. He wondered if his voice would echo in the huge room, but it didn't. "I have a case I want you to handle."

Herbert Sells glanced up slowly, removed the cigar with small, well-manicured fingers and smiled. It was the gentle smile of a man who has acquired just the proper amount of everything he wants from life.

"Sit down, Mr. Walker, isn't it?"

There was something odd about Sells' expression. Sells was having the same trouble his secretary had experienced. The lawyer seemed to be one of those men who never forgot his position or betrayed his emotions. Yet, Walker was sure those eyes were drinking in every detail as they shifted up and down.

"Robert Walker." He had almost forgotten to acknowledge Sells' question. "I guess I ought to know what your fee is before I take up your time."

The steady, brown eyes had stopped wandering now. A faint, slightly sardonic smile twisted Herbert Sells' lips.

He waited until Walker sat down uncomfortably on the edge of a blue and chrome masterpiece.

"My fees vary," Sells sank back behind his desk and applied a lighter to his dead cigar, "depending on the importance of the case. You'll pardon me, Mr. Walker, if I ask you a question before we mention business? Do you know a man named Jim Brawn?"

THE mystery in Walker's mind suddenly cleared. The secretary had

stared at him. Sells had studied him carefully. Why the devil hadn't he thought of it before?

"Only through the newspapers," he said. "Before Mr. Brawn retired, I was quite often mistaken for him. I understand he had to give up his business connections and is spending most of his time at home."

Jim Brawn was known to every business man in Chicago. For the past ten years he had been the driving power behind every big manufacturer. He amassed fortunes for dozens of city officials and took the cream for himself. Every deal that Brawn had been mixed up in bordered on the shadows of corruption.

"I imagine the resemblance might have caused you some inconvenience," Sells said evenly. "Mr. Brawn isn't popular with everyone."

Walker grinned.

"Not trouble exactly," he admitted. "Brawn isn't the type for overalls and grease. I work in a machine shop on Western Avenue. No one ever had any trouble keeping our identities straight."

If Sells had questioned him for a reason, the lawyer was evidently satisfied. He relaxed visibly.

"About your business, Mr. Walker? Why do you wish to employ me?"

"*Here goes McGillicuddy,*" Walker thought savagely. "*Maybe I'll sue him and get a new car out of the deal.*"

"It's about an accident," he said aloud. "I want to drag a guy into court and lick the hell out of him."

He hadn't expected Herbert Sells to stand up and cheer at the idea. Neither did he expect the expression of complete surprise that came over the little lawyer's face. Sells grunted like a man who has just had the wind knocked out of him. He leaned back in his chair, took a deep breath and grew very red in the face. His voice, when he spoke, was

full of something akin to horror.

"Mr. Walker, do you realize who you're asking to fight a traffic case? Have you seen my name in the papers?"

Walker gulped, groped for a fitting reply and remained speechless. The case of Walker versus McGillicuddy was the most important thing in the world right now. It had never seriously occurred to him that a lawyer would refuse to handle it.

Sells opened a drawer and produced a folded newspaper. He stood up, circled the desk and with a flourish placed the paper on Walker's lap.

"Read those headlines," he said in a reverent voice.

"PROMINENT BUSINESS LEADER ACQUITTED IN SCANDAL TRIAL."

In a fog, Walker managed to stagger through part of the opening paragraph:

"James Brawn, owner of half the industrial properties in this city, won his freedom today and left court again triumphant. Brawn, swearing his innocence in what has become one of Chicago's greatest paving-scandals, claimed he knew nothing of the million dollar pay-off received by officers of the Limestone Paving Block Corporation, Harvey, Illinois. The case, marking the sixth attempt to put Brawn behind bars, was handled with perfect finesse by Brawn's lawyer, Herbert Sells. Sells presented a brilliant . . ."

Bob Walker's voice trailed away into nothingness. He stared at Sells. The little man's chest swelled slightly.

"Of course, you understand why I wouldn't trouble myself with—er—traffic cases?"

Walker nodded dumbly and managed to murmur something that sounded like an apology.

"But," Sells was still basking in the warm light of his latest triumph, "if the amount you wish to collect is under

a hundred dollars and you can't produce positive proof that you were in the right, I'd suggest you drop the whole matter."

REALIZING that he had, without charge, offered sage words of advice, Herbert Sells retreated to his desk with the feeling that he had spent his day well. He nodded a goodbye to Walker as his deflated visitor slipped out of the office with as little fanfare as possible. Walker didn't dare look at the perfection and perfume behind the switchboard. He slammed his hat down savagely on his head and left swiftly.

Damn McGillicuddy anyhow. How could he collect for a hundred bucks; and produce positive proof? Maybe he had been running through a yellow traffic light. McGillicuddy didn't have any right to start his own car so quickly. Just the same, maybe he had been lucky to meet Herbert Sells. The advice was free and he'd have been in a hell of a jam if McGillicuddy managed to turn the evidence against him.

* * *

Still angry about the accident, but vastly wiser, Walker returned to the apartment, the dirty dishes, and the bread knife covered with peanut-butter. If there had been anyone around to argue with, he would have growled a few times, gone to the bathroom and locked himself in with a copy of good detective novel. There was no one to listen to his sad story.

He sat near the window for a while, staring at a neighbor who was running in and out of the building across the street, carrying pail after pail of water to wash a car. Walker counted the trips and wondered if the poor sap had ever heard of a hose. He decided he didn't give a damn.

It started to get dark, and he rose to light the floor lamp. Half way across

the room, he staggered and caught himself by clutching the back of a chair.

"What the h . . ."

He held on tightly, closing his eyes; then moved uncertainly to a position to where he could sink into the chair. His head seemed to be spinning at a terrific speed. For an instant, just before the strange feeling hit him, he was sure that a powerful spotlight had shot directly into his eyes. That was fantastic.

He leaned back, eyes closed, his breathing fast and uncertain. What the devil was wrong? His heart was strong enough to power a flying fortress. His health was perfect.

After a while he felt better and tried to stand up.

W H A M!

It hit him again, a searing, penetrating flash of white light that sent him toppling back into the chair. This time he didn't cry out. He sat very still, hands gripping the arms of the chair. His eyes closed and his head rolled back against the upholstery. He tried to escape the powerful beam of light.

A thick, impenetrable fog closed over him. He was blind. His head pounded like a pneumatic hammer. He tried to struggle to his feet; but the light seemed to pin him down, preventing him from moving a muscle.

Then into the fog a wavery, uncertain face of a man appeared. It wasn't a terrible face; just the image of a rather kindly, strong featured man. The eyes studied Walker. The face was at first clear, then distorted.

Walker tried to cry out, but his tongue was thick and fuzzy. Fear held him down like a lead weight. Fear crushed him lower and lower, always with the strange, foggy face coming closer to his.

Then—nothing!

Nothing!—at all!



Then into the fog a weavary, uncertain face of a man appeared



CHAPTER III

I've Killed a Man

JIM BRAWN wasn't a coward, nor was he a superman. His life had been so packed with action and hazard that he had, at the age of thirty, forced himself into seclusion to ward off unnecessary contacts with the outside world. All this had been done with each move planned well in advance and with every step taken to provide him with luxury and comfort.

Brawn knew every stool pigeon and gangster in Chicago. He had contacts with every citizen of financial importance. They came to him for money and he gave it to them with a share of their life as interest.

In ten years, Brawn had amassed a fortune that would have frightened any half-dozen bankers. He owned a walled-in home which served as a fortress.

He had purchased one of the oldest mansions on North Michigan Avenue and remodeled it completely. This was his hidden Utopia and he lived with a huge fortune as a barrier against the outside world.

No one could point out his mental terrors because they knew so little of him. Yet, fear forced him to install

'electric-eyes' on the wall that surrounded his mansion. These 'eyes' were connected to elaborate burglar alarms and automatically-fired machine guns.

The underworld could tell you that it wasn't gangsters Jim Brawn feared. It wasn't anything that you could put a finger on. Something caused the sickly expression that swept across his face when someone innocently mentioned an incident of the past. There was a grimness about him when he and his wife infrequently appeared in public.

Mrs. Brawn was a pale, mysterious creature who seemed to live in a dream. Regardless of the fine clothing and perfect setting that Brawn provided for her, Mrs. Brawn was lost amid the people she occasionally met. She seemed to be from a world apart.

Perhaps it was an incident involving her life that made Brawn shudder at times and stare behind him when passing through a dark room.

* * *

The phone rang somewhere in the rooms of the luxurious second floor apartment. The sun crept through small windows to tinge the lavish furniture with its color. Carpets, deep and richly woven muffled the sound of the butler's feet as he appeared from nowhere

and glided toward the lounge.

The phone rang three times before he reached it, and the man's wrinkled face was clouded with anger at the disturbance. He picked up the instrument.

"James Brawn's residence."

"Hello, Ward! This is Sells. Tell Brawn I've got to speak to him."

Ward, the butler, scowled. His voice remained smooth and respectful.

"I'll call Mr. Brawn if you say so, sir. He's resting in his room."

Sells' voice rose slightly.

"His life might depend on it," he said a trifle sarcastically. "Does he value it?"

A new expression touched Ward's face. Something came alive in his eyes. His hand dropped automatically to his coat pocket.

"Just a moment, Mr. Sells. I'll connect you directly with Mr. Brawn's bedroom."

"Don't bother." The voice came from behind the butler. He whirled around quickly. Jim Brawn, sleepy eyed and clad in a royal blue robe, stood in the open door. "I'll take it here."

The butler passed the phone to Brawn who took it impatiently.

"Hello, Sells. What is it this time?"

THE butler moved slowly away. Sells' voice could be heard clearly in the quiet room.

Brawn listened patiently for a minute, then his face turned an ugly red.

"Wait a minute. I want Ward to hear this."

He held his hand over the receiver and pivoted.

"Ward, come back here."

The butler had been waiting nearby. He came in quickly.

"Yes, sir?"

"Sells wants to give you the description of a man," Brawn said in an expressionless voice. "It seems that this person called Sells and said he was, shall

we say, angry because my associates trimmed him on a little deal. The deal, he says, was shady and he's after me with a gun. Sells seems worried. I think you should know about it since you're so clever at turning people away from the door."

A cunning smile encompassed Ward's heavy face. The dignity of the butler was gone. The man who took the phone was a killer; a perfect combination of butler and watch-dog.

"Yes sir, Mr. Sells." He spent a moment listening, then said "Spike Zeigler? Yes, I knew him in Saint Louis. Sure! I don't think he'll see Mr. Brawn. We will discourage him."

When he hung up, Brawn had already left the room. Ward drew a stubby automatic from his pocket, polished it lovingly on his sleeve and released the safety catch. Ward had a clear idea of the habits of hunters like Spike Zeigler. He went down to the first floor, into the walled garden at the rear of the mansion and took his place in a canvas chair where he had a clear view of the entire rear wall that bordered the alley.

* * *

Jim Brawn was in a fine mood this afternoon. He had slept late, awakening to remember that Herbert Sells had once more saved him embarrassment and perhaps a prison term. Brawn gloated just a little over his own cleverness at being so well covered in every direction.

The phone call from Sells didn't trouble him greatly. The guns on the walls and the burglar-alarm system weren't for rats like Spike Zeigler. Zeigler was one of the Little Men. Brawn hadn't met him; nor had he met half of the other bums he pushed out of business. Every once in a while one of them decided to 'get' Brawn. Ward took care of such details. You never asked Ward

questions. You paid him three times what a hutler was worth and he kept outsiders from trouhling you.

Brawn wandered into the gun room in a reflective mood. Odd he thought, how far a man can come in a few years, if he has a start.

H E FROWNED. Every time he felt at peace with the world, the same damned ghost popped up. The pale, spiritless thing he was married to—the protection on the walls—the shadows that pursued him at night—these things had attached themselves to him when he got his start in life. Now he had a fortune, hut with it a past that no amount of money could make him forget.

To hell with it! A man can't have everything. If his imagination played occasional tricks on him, that was a small enough price to pay for his material goods.

Brawn's gun room was filled with oddities. He didn't stop with elephant rifles. His imagination went further. On pegs over the stone fireplace rested the stubby machine gun that had knocked hell out of Louie the Mug, one of Chicago's earliest hig time gangsters; a sawed-off shotgun, that had killed ten Italians during the Christmas Day riots on Clark Street, hung by its trigger near the window. Brawn enjoyed collecting killer guns. He never mixed with the men or the weapons personally.

They were here, kept clean and loaded by Ward, ready to spit death in an instant. It was that fact that caused Brawn to love his collection. It made him feel more powerful to own the guns that had wiped out some of the city's most powerful mugs.

The tommy-gun fascinated him. He'd have to try it out on the target that Ward had built in the lower hasement. Brawn went leisurely to his room,

dressed in a loose fitting brown business suit and jammed a brown felt hat down on his head.

The hat was like a part of his body. He grinned as he surveyed himself in the mirror. Damned fool he thought; the minute you dress, you're not complete without a felt on your scalp. Good thing you don't have to be polite to people. They might not appreciate a guy who wears a hat in his bedroom.

He wandered downstairs, started toward the front door, then thought better of it. Better give Ward time to work. Spike Zeigler would be two-thirds stiff and he'd pack a rod. Spike wouldn't be a pleasant companion for lunch.

A NGRY and impatient to think that he had to remain in because a killer was after him, Brawn wandered back to the gun room. He stared into the fireplace for a long time. Ward had left his chair in the garden and was moving stealthily through the well trimmed hushes toward the rear gate. Ward was like a cat. He liked to stalk carefully, then pounce on his victim and make the kill. Brawn wondered what it would feel like to have Ward after you.

"C R A C K"

Brawn jumped away from the window and stiffened against the wall. Things were happening fast.

"CRACK-CRACK"

Two more shots, closely spaced. Then silence.

"He's got him," Brawn whispered to himself. "Ward guessed right. Zeigler tried to get over the gate."

He stepped boldly to the window, his eyes searching the hushes and the stone walk that led back to the gate.

"C R A C K"

Glass flew in Brawn's face, showering him with sharp splinters. An oath escaped his lips as he dropped to the car-

pet.

Someone had fired at him.

The bullet missed by inches, crashing through the glass near his head.

A cold, unreasonable anger swept through Brawn. He seldom fought. He didn't have to. But if Spike Zeigler was in the garden, *Ward wouldn't fire again.*

Brawn lay still under the window, his fists clenched, teeth pressed together so tightly that his temples throbbed.

If Zeigler had killed Ward, he'd wish he was living in the comparative comfort of Hell before the day was over.

"Snap!"

The sound of a breaking twig came from the terrace. Zeigler thought the shot had found a target. He was coming in.

A wild urge for revenge sent Brawn crawling across the floor to the fireplace. Above him was the Tommy-gun. Its round magazine was loaded with death.

He stood up quickly, grasped it in both hands and jerked it free of the peg. There was no emotion left in him; no thought of what might happen if Zeigler fired first.

He walked toward the door of the gun room like a man moving in a dream. He held the gun loosely in both hands, index finger curled lightly over the trigger. Spike Zeigler was outside, staring open mouthed like an idiot, when Brawn reached the terrace. Brawn's mouth worked convulsively. His eyes were cold as death itself. He raised the gun as Zeigler regained his senses and tried to get his automatic into action. Awed, frightened Spike Zeigler never had a chance.

Brawn took a step forward, pressed the trigger and released a rattling hail of death. Fire belched from the barrel of the Tommy-gun. Spike Zeigler tipped back on his heels from the im-

pact and sank to the flagstones. He lay on his side, staring up with surprise etched in his round, glassy eyes.

BRAWN looked down at the dead gangster. Smoke curled from the barrel of his gun and its odor stung his nose.

"You poor, damned fool," he said bitterly, "it would take a dozen of you to make up for Ward."

Outside the gate, he heard the shrill cry of a woman.

"I think it came from in there, officer. Three shots there was, from Mr. Brawn's garden. Just now, a machine gun."

Brawn turned and walked into the house. He made no attempt to conceal the gun. He immediately went to the phone and dialed his lawyer.

"Hello, Sells?" His voice was calm, unburied. "Get out here right away. I've just killed a man."

He listened as Sells sputtered and shouted at the other end of the line. Then, remembering that two men lay dead in the garden and that the police were already after him, he changed his mind.

"On second thought," he said, "perhaps this is a tougher problem. The police have been waiting for me to stick my neck into a noose. I'll come to your office."

He hung up before Sells could catch his breath for a second onslaught.

Jim Brawn opened the wall safe near the bed and drew out a small satchel. He might be away for an extended visit this time, depending on what the law had to say about the dead men in his garden. It would be well to have a few thousand dollars along to cover expenses.

A small door led from the cellar to the tool shed, close to the side wall. Through the wall, another door opened

into the subway that took pedestrians under Michigan Avenue. It might be well to go out that way. No fuss, and no embarrassing arguments with the police.

CHAPTER IV

The Scarlet Ray

PERHAPS he had slept. Perhaps he had staggered forward a few steps and fallen into the white mist that swirled around his body.

When Bob Walker struggled to his feet, the mist was clearing. He felt around him, trying to find a chair, or perhaps the wall. Anything that would be familiar.

There was only emptiness. Then, as the fog vanished, he became aware of totally new surroundings. He stood on a small, raised platform that jutted from the wall of a vast, colorful room. The room was like nothing he had ever seen. The ceiling was high, at least twenty feet over his head and a cool green light radiated from its surface. The platform on which he stood was surrounded by a steel rail, with an open gate at one end.

Gradually, as his vision improved, he saw the blue floor and his eyes travel along it to what looked like a massive microscope. The machine, if microscope it was, stood ten feet in the air. Under the lens, where the specimen plate would normally be, was a round, glowing globe. He saw that the globe was a perfect reproduction of the world.

The room was absolutely silent. Cool green wavered and splashed pleasantly against the plain walls.

He moved forward hesitantly toward the little gate that led down from the platform. He descended three steps and moved across the floor until he was halfway to the machine.

A blood-red light flashed on suddenly, pinning him in its direct center. He stopped, his body stiffening.

"Welcome to Tebba, Jim Brawn."

Walker's eyes darted about, trying to find the owner of the voice.

"Here I am, at the scanner, Jim. Don't let me frighten you—yet."

Then the scanner was the strange machine, Walker thought. He looked again, and saw a man's head rise slightly from the top of the machine. Then the man stood up and climbed down a short flight of steps to the floor.

"I was busy making sure you had a fast trip. Sorry I couldn't greet you sooner."

The man who walked toward Bob Walker was rather young, and not bad looking. A skin-tight, black suit fitted his body, giving him a stealthy appearance as he moved forward. The quiet face contrasted strangely with watery blue eyes and a mouth that at this moment indicated controlled anger.

"I've waited ten years for you, Jim. Be damned thankful that the scanner didn't break down and leave you halfway between your own plane and the plane of Tebba."

What he couldn't understand didn't trouble Bob Walker greatly. There were a couple of things he *did* know and they burned him up plenty. First it was Sells' secretary, then Sells himself. Now old 'panther-man', a character from a comic book, was calling him Brawn. Walker's fists tightened and his voice, though carefully controlled, held no brotherly love.

"Look, Bub, there's a mistake somewhere. My name isn't Brawn and I've never had the pleasure of knowing you. Let's get the introduction straightened out, have a beer or two and part company. These foggy headaches don't appeal to me. And they last longer than I like."

HE THOUGHT at first the man in black was going to hit him. He hoped he would try. The guy was about his own age, but the muscles under that fine looking black suit were a little dumpy. Walker was itching for something he could throw a fist at.

There was hatred and disgust in the other's eyes.

"The same old Jim Brawn, I see. You stole my wife. You stole the plans of my greatest inventions. You even destroyed the equipment that brought me here to Tebba, and made it impossible for me to return to earth. Brawn, you've nothing to fear from me for a while. Once and for all get the idea out of your head that you're going to escape."

"God damn it, man," Walker cried, "this is getting serious. I tell you I'm not Brawn. My name is Walker, I live a poor and quiet life and I want to go back to it. Now turn the switches and get me out of this Buck Rogers paradise."

A low chuckle.

"You're one of the finest actors on earth, Jim. I admit it. Yes, though it may surprise you, I admit that I am weak and helpless when facing you on even terms. I had the brains, Jim, but I couldn't promote my own inventions. I didn't mind losing the inventions. When you took my wife, and when you refuse to press the switches that would bring me home again, I knew I'd have to kill you some day."

Walker was shaking with anger by this time. The damned maniac; hadn't he told him he wasn't Brawn?

"In about two minutes," he howled, "I'm going to make you see the light. In fact, plenty of lights. Have you ever been patted on the nose?"

Panther-man backed away slightly, his expression clearly indicating fear.

"Perhaps I should warn you," he

said, "that you are standing in the center of a death-ray. It is a beam of red light that, when mixed with certain other rays, will produce immediate unconsciousness, or instant death. I would show no sign of moving from that beam, if I were you. The results would be immediate."

"My name may not be Brawn," Walker thought, "*but it'll be mud if I don't walk the straight and narrow.*"

"Now wait a minute," he begged. "Let's talk this over. I don't know who you are or where I am; but, I prefer a nice quiet street in Chicago to Tebba, or whatever you call it."

"You will remain here," the man in black said slowly. "I have wasted time talking to you, Brawn, because it pleases me to hear you use childish arguments. That's not like you, Jim. You used to fight hard and not ask for mercy. I'm not going to kill you at once. First, I'll . . ."

Walker crouched suddenly and shot forward with all his weight,

"*You're damned right you're not . . .*"

He felt himself plowing into black-suit's stomach with the full force of a hard shoulder.

"Ugh!"

THEY went down together, rolled over and over on the floor, each trying to get a hold. Black-suit was under him. Walker's fist came down, crashing into his opponent's jaw. The man didn't move again. His jaw was cut. Blood trickled from the corner of his mouth.

Walker stood up and ran back toward the platform. How could he go back? There was no retreat. The machine had something to do with it, but he knew nothing of the gadgets in the room.

He turned back, staring at the figure on the floor. Black-suit was sitting up,

a sickly look on his face. He held a tiny box in one hand, and with the other, he was turning a small dial.

Then Walker saw the reason for the box. The beam of red light in which they had been standing, was moving restlessly back and forth across the floor. It came slowly toward him.

"Certain rays—produce unconsciousness—others—death . . ."

He remembered black-suit's warning, and turned, running away from the advancing beam.

"So you're frightened now, eh, Jim?"

He was so damned scared that if the wall hadn't been there, he'd keep on running until he dropped. But the wall was there, and the light kept moving onward, searching like a huge, red eye. Walker was cornered. The beam was within three feet of him.

He turned directly toward it, his eyes on the man across the room.

"Your gadget better work, brother," he howled, "or you'll lose your neck this time."

He dashed forward, straight through the beam. At first he was sure he had made it safely. Then, already through the light, a staggering blow hit him at the base of the neck and he went down like a ton of bricks. He felt his chin hit the hard floor. He was out cold before there was any sensation of pain.

CHAPTER V

City of Tebba

HERBERT SELLS moved restlessly about his office. The curtains were drawn and the blinds adjusted so no light could escape. He glanced at his watch. It was close to midnight. It had been hours since Brawn had phoned. Hours in which Sells sought for a solution and found none. Jim Brawn was in the soup this time, and it

would take more than a clever lawyer to drag him out.

Ordinarily the law wouldn't touch Brawn for knocking off two gunmen like Ward and Zeigler. But this wasn't an ordinary case. Brawn had pushed the city and the state laws around so long that they were just waiting for a chance to clamp him behind bars for good. This was the ideal opportunity. A double murder. Murder which pointed to Brawn with every clue. The cops had gone over Brawn's place with everything but a comb, and they had all the evidence they needed.

Sells swore softly, tossed away a partly smoked cigar and slumped down at his desk. He had aged ten years since morning. He looked as though he had been dumped, clothing and all, into a steam bath, and allowed to soak there all day.

A shadow paused before the glass panel in the door. Sells froze in his chair, waiting. Brawn had his own key.

"Sells?"

Sells rose and crossed the room.

"That you, Brawn?"

The door opened quickly and Jim Brawn came in. His hat was drawn down over his eyes. His suit, neat and well pressed only this morning, was covered with mud. A sly grin lighted his face.

"Think I wouldn't make it?"

Sells shook his head.

"You've always made the grade before. That's why I waited."

Brawn moved across the office and sat down close to the wall, where he could watch the door. He found a cigarette, waited as Sells hurried to him with a lighter, then took a deep puff. Then he tossed the cigarette to the rug and ground it out with his heel. Sells' eyes clouded but Brawn grinned.

"Never mind about the nice rug," he said. "You'll be able to buy a dozen

of them when this case is over."

Sells winced. He placed a small hand on the seated man's shoulder and smiled down at him almost pleadingly.

"Jim, for God's sake what can we do about it?"

Surprise flooded Brawn's eyes. Surprise, and cold, deliberate anger.

"Do about it? What the hell do I care what you do? Just get me out of a murder rap, that's all!"

Sells, in spite of his size, was no milquetoast.

"Just like that," he said sharply. "You murdered a man, maybe two, and expect me to produce a miracle."

Brawn sprang to his feet so suddenly that Sells backed away from him.

"Wait a minute, Jim. Don't get angry."

BRAWN stood very still staring down at the lawyer. His lips were pressed in to a hard, white line.

"No one's mad, Sells, not yet. You've made a fortune handling cases for me. Now the first tough one has come up; you're trying to back down. What's the score, Sells? Do we understand each other, or don't we?"

Sells shrank away from him. He retreated to his desk, slumped down behind it and stared at Brawn.

"Jim, for God's sake, understand me, will you! The other stuff had loopholes in it. I could argue my way out. This time they've got you just where they want you. The police aren't going to slip on anything like this. They'll shoot you in cold blood if they get half a chance."

At the mention of the police, Brawn sobered. He knew Sells was right. Knew that this would be the toughest case the lawyer had ever taken to court.

"What do you suggest?" he asked sarcastically. "Shall I go in and give myself up like a nice little man?"

Sells shook his head despairingly.

"I've got to have time to think," he said. "Can't you lay low for a month or two? There are places where you can hide."

Brawn smiled.

"That's *your* job, Sells. Remember, you're my big strong protector."

"Rub it in," Sells invited bitterly. "Get yourself in a jam and blame the whole thing on me."

"I've got to blame it on someone," Brawn said. "Maybe you can suggest another?"

Sells didn't answer for a moment. He was staring straight ahead. Then a smile of genuine triumph spread across his pinched face. He leaned back slowly and lifted his feet to the desk top. The old confidence was coming back. His voice was strong and filled with an undercurrent of excitement.

"Maybe I *can* suggest someone," he said. "You need a place to hide where they haven't a chance in the world of finding you. I think, with a little work, we can change your name to Robert Walker, produce an apartment and a complete history for you which the police won't be able to tear down."

Brawn scowled.

"Go on."

Sells told him of Robert Walker's visit. About the startling resemblance.

"Walker is living alone in an apartment on the south side. After he was here I made sure the law didn't send him around to check up on me. He lives alone, has a respectable past and would fit the picture nicely."

"All of which leads to what?" Brawn asked.

Sells grinned.

"If Walker happened to get rubbed out quietly some night, and his body wasn't found, you'd be able to step into his shoes, wouldn't you?"

Brawn looked thoughtful.

"I haven't a chance to fight this thing out in court, have I?"

Sells shook his head.

Brawn stood up.

"Sometimes I think your brilliance approaches genius. I'll take care of Walker. Give me his address."

Sells sat motionless.

"Genius come high," he said. "I've forgotten Walker's address, but I'm pretty sure ten-grand would improve my memory."

They stared at each other across the desk. Brawn's fists tightened, and then relaxed again. He smiled admiringly.

"Damnit, Sells, I *knew* I'd chosen a clever lawyer."

He reached for his pocket-book.

BRAWN approached the apartment house cautiously, making sure that he was not seen entering the lobby. It was the usual type, four story building with five entrances off the court.

He tried each lobby, finding Robert Walker's name in the rear section. Choosing a name at random, he punched a bell and waited for the buzzer to let him in.

"Who's there?" a shrill voice demanded from somewhere above.

"I forgot my key," he called. "I hope I didn't bother you?" He stepped inside and waited quietly.

"That's all right," the voice answered grumpily.

He sighed with relief. So far, so good. Walker's apartment was on the first floor. He moved up the short flight of stairs and along a dim hall to the plain door marked Apt. 6—Robert Walker.

He knocked lightly and waited. No answer. Someone was running a vacuum on the second floor. A baby was carrying in the next apartment. Brawn tried again. To his surprise, the door moved under the force of his knock

and opened a crack. Still no sound came from within.

He pushed the door wide, saw that the room was empty and stepped in. He closed the door behind him and threw the bolt.

On his toes, Brawn moved across a room that seemed a combination of living-room and bachelor's paradise. Magazines, soiled clothes and old papers were everywhere. He placed one hand over his pocket and moved swiftly from the living room to the bath. It was empty. The kitchen was the same; dirty dishes in the sink, a bread wrapper and long knife lying on the table.

Robert Walker was not at home. Brawn made the rounds carefully. Returning to the living room, he came face to face with Walker's portrait which stared at him from the radio.

He studied it. The frown on his face changed to a satisfied smile. The man in the picture might have been his twin.

The desk near the window revealed a bill-fold. Brawn went through it hurriedly. It yielded ten dollars, several cards of identification, a social-security number and a draft card.

He took his own bill-fold from his pocket, removed the money from it and placed it in Walker's. Then he put Walker's bill-fold in his own pocket.

During the next hour, Brawn went over Walker's apartment carefully, noting with grim satisfaction the trunk full of odds and ends that yielded clippings and photographs of Walker's family and his own life. Walker, it seemed, was alone in the world. *His complete life history was in the trunk.*

Brawn was content. He went to the bath-room, removed his clothing and put on a frayed, maroon robe that hung behind the door.

He would have ample time to destroy the clothing and his own bill-fold later. Now there was more important business

at hand.

As long as Robert Walker was alive, Brawn wasn't safe. He placed a chair near the window where he had a clear view of anyone who entered the court. He took the automatic from his coat and placed it carefully on the table near his elbow.

When Walker came through that door, the silencer on the automatic would prevent other tenants from knowing that he faced death.

FOR the second time in twenty four hours, Bob Walker awakened feeling as though he'd been dragged along the bottom of the Chicago drainage canal. Opening one eye cautiously, he stared around him. There was no one in sight. Rising on one elbow, he felt the ache in his head and flopped down again. He was lying on a small bed. The room was so tiny that it would never have allowed another cot within its walls. The walls, the ceiling, and the floor were of a flat, stone-like stuff, tinted a green color. There was no door, no window.

Walker tried to sit up again, succeeded in getting both feet on the floor and struggled to his feet. He staggered, clutched for support and leaned against the wall.

The walls sent forth a pleasant glow of light, yet he could see no opening through which it came.

"Death rays," he said in a disgusted voice. "Oversized microscopes—supermen—nuts!"

He slumped down again.

"He says I'm Jim Brawn and I say I'm not." A puzzled expression dawned on his face. "It isn't Chicago. It isn't any place I've ever been before."

He rocked his aching head slowly in his hands.

"Tebba," he moaned. "Where in hell is Tebba. The way that bum hit

me with that light-ray, Tebba must be a suburb of hell."

He was startled by the clear voice that floated in to him, seemingly through the wall.

"Tebba will be hell for you, Brawn. I'll see to that."

Walker looked up quickly. The voice was black-suit's, but he wasn't in sight.

"I've improved on many of my inventions, Brawn, since you condemned me to stay here." The voice again. "Take the cell you're in for example. Perforated walls, built so well that my voice penetrates them easily, yet you couldn't break out with T.N.T."

"What the hell did you hit me with?" Walker asked in an aggrieved tone. "You oughta' look me up in the telephone directory before you push me around. I know Brawn. I'm not him. I can't help it if he looks like me. Can't you be reasonable and talk this over?"

"And give you another chance to outsmart me? No, Jim, you've pulled your last double-cross on Nick Freeman. I'm playing the aces from now on."

Nick Freeman! Nick Freeman, Chicago inventor of ten years back. Nick Freeman who disappeared from Brawn's laboratory one night and whose body was found in the Chicago river. The papers had been full of it. Walker had been interested in Brawn then. He had read all the reports. The startled look on his face must have been visible to the man who talked with him.

"You act surprised, Jim. Surely you recognized me?"

Walker sprang to his feet and rushed the wall. It threw him back quickly. His fists were clenched. He waved them like a mad-man.

"You horse-faced idiot," he howled. "You dime-store superman. I tell you once and for all, my name's Bob Walker. Sure I look like Brawn. Did

it ever enter your thick skull that you might be wrong? If all the inhabitants of Tebba are as bull-headed as you are, shoot me and get it over with. *Let me out of here, will you?*"

FOR an instant, the room was silent. The voice beyond the wall didn't answer. Then, Nick Freeman spoke once more.

"You are still trying to trick me, Brawn. I'm sure of that."

"You're nuts," Walker said sourly. "I never tried to trick anyone in my life. I'll convince you of that if you'll let me talk face to face with you."

The end of the cell slid aside, revealing a long hall.

"Follow the crooked hall," the voice said. "Be careful and proceed slowly. I'll be waiting for you."

The 'crooked hall' looked as straight as a rule to Walker, but he took the voice's advice literally, and started to move down it slowly. A moment later he was glad he had.

Not ten feet from the cell in which he had awakened, he hit an invisible wall with a resounding thump. He swore and started to feel about with his hands. Then the meaning of the 'crooked-hall' dawned upon him. He had to move slowly, feeling his way back and forth across it, making a hundred turns, all because the hall was a maze of invisible inner walls, like an elaborate fun-house.

If his guess about this place was right, if it was a prison where Nick Freeman's enemies were kept, the 'crooked-hall' was a wonderful device to prevent them from escaping. No man could travel its length at any speed without breaking his neck.

Swearing sourly at every step, Walker managed to feel his way forward around unseen barriers.

At last he was through the hall. A flat, doorless wall faced him once more.

"Where do we go from here?" he asked aloud. "Maybe after the fun-house, you've got a tunnel of love?"

The wall rolled away silently.

A gasp of surprise escaped Walker's lips. Then Tebba wasn't a phony after all? No one could build a stage set as elaborate as the vast city he saw before him.

The wall was gone. Walker found himself standing on a terrace high above a huge, dream-like city. It reminded him of a composite of all the Cities Of The Future he had seen in magazine advertisements.

Yet, one great difference impressed him. There seemed to be no sky. At least no sky like the one he knew. The entire metropolis of Tebba gave off the same green, glowing light he had seen constantly since he arrived. Above the city, there might have been a huge curtain across the sky. That curtain glowed a pale green so that it looked like a calm, deep ocean turned upside down.

Tebba, at least he assumed the city was Tebba, seemed to have no streets and no travel on the surface. It was a vast series of square buildings, without openings. No birds, not a flying thing marred the perfection of the green sky.

"You see the perfect experimental plant for my invention, Jim Brawn."

The voice startled Walker from his dreamy examination of Tebba.

"Oh, oh!" he said disgustedly. "Here we go again. Okay, Super-man, tell me more. If I'm changing my name to Brawn just to hear you talk, I might as well get the whole lecture."

NICK FREEMAN, hidden somewhere in the vast stone building, chuckled good humoredly.

"Sometimes I confess that you're entertaining, Brawn. I know I have to

kill you, and yet I admit that I'm weak, as I always was, so far as you are concerned. You ruined my life once, and God help me, I'm on the verge of believing your lies again. It's funny, isn't it?"

"Oh my, yes!" Walker said dryly. "Ha ha ha, it's killing me, or it probably will."

"But, back to Tebba," Freeman's voice continued. "Tebba is the largest city in the fifth plane, Brawn."

Walker choked.

"The fifth *what*?"

"Don't you remember? I told you the atom-changer would work when I built it. That night we sat in the laboratory and you promised to work the levers as I directed, I actually passed through the space-wrinkle and landed in Tebba. At that time, I fully expected you to bring me back. After I had been here a while, I knew you'd betrayed me. You had no intention of bringing me back into my own world."

"At first I didn't worry, Brawn. I thought you had failed because of your lack of knowledge. Later, when I became popular here and was allowed to go on with my work, I invented the 'scanner'. Through that, I watched you month after month, as you made love to my wife and finally married her. I watched you use my inventions to build up a fortune. I waited, Brawn, because I intended to bring you here some day and pay you back in full for what you did to me."

As the voice droned on, Walker started to get a picture of what had happened.

"I quite often watched you at Herbert Sells' office," Freeman continued. "I remember how I used to hate Sells when he teased me because I wasn't shrewd like you are. Today you were at Sells' office. I followed you with the scanner to a small apartment. What is

it, Brawn, another hideout?"

"Hideout hell, Walker said, "it's my home."

Freeman chuckled.

"You're not Brawn, is that it? I've heard that song before, Jim. You'll be quite happy here in Tebba for a few days. You see, there are two cities, Tebba and Theba. Theba isn't nearly as powerful. They are at war. Since I gave the Tebbans the advantage of my creative mind, they've been so far ahead of the Thebans that no one has worried much."

As Freeman talked, Walker was aware of a subtle change in the color of the sky over Tebba. The green had faded slightly and small, red spots showed like clouds against the green.

"From your balcony," Freeman said, "you see only the face of Tebba. Below those buildings is the heart of a great city. Thousands of people living under the surface. Tebbans are the perfect builders, led by Nick Freeman who supplies them with the imagination they lack."

The red spots were growing larger, brighter. Walker felt fear grow inside him. Somehow those red clouds seemed to foretell tragedy.

Then Freeman's voice seemed to falter and grow more distant. A static broke in, buzzing loudly.

"Brawn—get off the balcony."

It was Freeman's voice, interrupted by a howling, screaming static. At the same time, the green sky popped wide open and a great curtain of red flame fell downward. The scarlet curtain enveloped the city of Tebba, turning the building crimson. The wall behind Walker started to close.

"Hurry, or you will be destroyed!"

Walker tore his eyes away from the scene before him and ran swiftly toward the closing wall. The crimson curtain was close to the balcony, leaping toward

him like a vast wall of flame. He reached the wall and managed to squeeze through the opening.

It slammed behind him and something hit it a smashing, shaking blow from outside. The building quivered under the impact. Walker stood still, wondering if the force could break through. Waiting for the voice again, to guide him through the strange labyrinth of halls, Walker stood motionless.

Thus far he had only one contact in Tebba. The voice of Nick Freeman. He wondered if the static indicated that Freeman was in trouble? What was the meaning of the smashing, all-enveloping curtain of scarlet?

Then he thought of Tebba, the sister city of Tebba.

Was this the way the Tebans made war?

It was, indirectly, Brawn's fault that he, Walker, was in this mess. God pity Brawn if he ever got his fingers around his neck.

CHAPTER VI

Second Visitor

CHICAGO sweltered under a burning August sun. The tiny apartment in which Jim Brawn sat was like a furnace. There was no breeze to stir the curtains at the window. Brawn felt like a caged, half-crazed animal. The tray on the table overflowed with cigarette butts. The morning paper lay on the floor with headline exposed:

MANHUNT IN FULL SWING

Murderer in Hiding

He had read the front page story over a dozen times, finally flinging the paper away from him in disgust. The police were on his trail. They had traced him to Herbert Sells' office and lost him there. Sells told the law that Brawn had visited him, but did not tell what

his plans were. Sells hinted that Brawn had escaped to Canada.

The police were not fooled by Sells. They had dealt with him before. A dragnet had been placed around the city. Brawn's home was under guard.

The thing that troubled Brawn most was that damned automatic lying on the table. For a week he had spent almost every moment in the apartment. The gun, with its silencer, was within reaching distance every second.

He had to use that gun before he was safe.

Wearing Walker's clothing, he had chanced one trip to the grocery. The grocer had greeted him as Mr. Walker and wanted to know why he hadn't been in lately. Brawn muttered something about being away on vacation, and left in a state of nervous collapse. Normally a cool thinker, Walker's failure to show up had driven him to a state of hysteria.

He tossed another cigarette on the floor and watched it moodily for a few minutes. Then he arose and once more pulled the battered trunk from under the bed.

During the week he had spent in Walker's rooms, he had digested the contents of the trunk a dozen times. He knew Walker's history from the time the man was born. He had letters from Walker's parents in his pocket. He carried Walker's bill-fold and the valuable data it contained. Once Walker was out of the way, he could change his personality to fit Walker's—could become Bob Walker.

Meanwhile no moment, day or night, brought him any rest. He awakened out of a sound sleep imagining that the apartment door was opening. He feared that Walker's rent might be due. How much did the man pay? How would he deliver the money?

Did Walker have any friends in the

building who stopped in?

Brawn thought not. So far he had been entirely safe. How long could it last?

Unable to stand the withering heat, he donned a fresh shirt, making sure that Walker's monogram was on the cuff. Tearing open a fresh pack of cigarettes, he went down stairs and out into the stifling sun.

He had to eat.

He shrank away from another visit to the grocer, yet it was best that he go only to the places where Walker was known. Reluctantly he entered the Sunland Grocery and faced pudgy Mr. Sunland for the second time. The little man seemed very pleased to see him.

"You don't get in much any more, Mr. Walker. You been sick?"

Brawn smiled, trying to act as light hearted as he knew Walker would.

"Been pretty busy lately," he said.

Sunland frowned.

"That's funny," he said. "The employment manager at your plant called me the other day. You remember giving my name when you started working there?"

Brawn nodded.

"They wanted to know where you were. Said they called your apartment and you didn't answer."

Brawn hadn't thought of that. Of course, Walker worked for a living. Help was hard to get right now.

"I've been out of town again," he said weakly. "Had some special work to do."

He tossed a grocery list down on the counter.

"Fill this list and have it sent over to the apartment. Here's enough to cover the bill."

He thoughtlessly drew a fifty dollar bill from his pocket and realized at once that he had made a bad mistake. Too late, Mr. Sunland saw the bill and his

round eyes widened.

"My golly," he breathed, "that out of town work pays good, don't it, Mr. Walker?"

He pocketed the bill quickly.

"Can't make that much often," Brawn said lamely. "Have the groceries sent over right away, will you?"

"Yes, sir!"

HE TURNED and hurried out.

Damned nose Mr. Sunland. Money didn't mean anything to Brawn. He'd have to change his ideas about living, if he was going to pose as a working man.

The sun hit him like a searing flame as he reached the sidewalk. Frightened now, he moved hurriedly toward the corner. A man standing on the far side of the street casually lighted a cigar and tossed the flaming match away. Down the block, a car started up and moved slowly ahead of Brawn toward the apartment.

Brawn started to shiver violently. His neck felt as though some one had dashed ice water down it. He couldn't be sure of the man with the cigar, but the moving car showed every indication of letting him catch up with it.

Another strange thing happened as he moved toward the building. A flash of light hit his face, as if someone were flashing a mirror into his eyes. Each time it hit him, he flinched. The light became steady. He was sure that someone above him was sending the steady rays of the mirrored sun into his eyes.

Odd, because the light came from directly above, while the buildings here were all small, two story homes.

The car gained speed and moved farther down the block. Brawn didn't dare look back at the man with the cigar.

He reached the apartment building and moved into the court. Then panic

seized him and he dashed through the court and into the hall. No one was there. He slipped the key into the lock, raced upstairs and fought the terror that clung to him until he was locked safely inside.

He felt better now. Better, that is, except for the damned light that persisted in blinding him. Could fear have affected his eye sight? The idea was absurd, yet he spent several minutes before the mirror, trying to study any change that might have taken place in his eye-balls. There was none, yet the light persisted, making his head ache.

God-damned Walker, he thought miserably. If he doesn't show up tonight, I'll have to take a chance and get out of here.

If the men on the street were from the police department, they'd check up with Sunland and find out about the fifty dollars. Walker wasn't the type to carry that kind of money. Brawn had only a few hours to reach a decision. Hours in which he must watch the door and keep his gun in his pocket. Hours which threatened to be hell because of the strange affliction that affected his sight.

HOW long Boh Walker stood in the crooked hall, he didn't know. The walls around him continued to shake for perhaps half an hour, remaining firm against the terrific pressure from outside. He heard garbled bits of conversation coming to him from all directions, and decided that the walls must conduct sound easily from any part of the building.

Then, as suddenly as the attack started, it was over. The pounding stopped. The building stopped rocking. The hall of many turns was silent once more.

"Do I get a guide again, or don't I?" he asked in a loud voice. Walker wasn't

kidding himself that he wasn't frightened. He had every reason now to believe that Nick Freeman told the truth. This was the fifth plane, or at least another part of a world that he had never dreamed of. He couldn't let down now, or show any fear. His bravado had served him well thus far. Freeman was beginning to doubt himself.

No answer came to his question.

"Freeman," he shouted, "get me out of this mess, will you?"

His own voice seemed sucked into void. No sound returned. A panic seized him. Perhaps Freeman had been destroyed? What would he do if the Thebans, assuming it was they who attacked Freeman's city, had murdered the inventor? Walker started to make his way back through the crooked hall. To his surprise, the invisible barriers had been removed. The long, wide hall was clear of any obstructions.

He went toward the cell, feeling that he at least knew that much about Freeman's strange building. Reaching the wall, he tried to find a way of getting back into the cell. His efforts were useless. The hall was solid once more, a single, long room without outlets.

For ten minutes he wandered back and forth like a caged animal. Then static filled the place with raucous noise. It quieted gradually and Nick Freeman's voice greeted him.

"Perhaps you feared that I had forgotten you, Brawn?"

Walker grinned, feeling somehow that the man could see him.

"Oh, no!" he said. "I like it here. Reminds me of a nightmare I used to have when I was a kid. How about producing a cauldron of oil now and frying me in deep fat?"

Freeman chuckled.

"You're sense of humor is improving," he said. "I'm sorry that I frightened you. You see, the puny efforts of

the Thebans have produced a poor copy of our scarlet death-ray. However, in stealing my plans, they were not able to produce a weapon which will penetrate the buildings of Tebba. They'll be back for another try, but it will be as useless as all the rest. How would you like to see a group of my people? They've gathered in the city rotunda to express new gratification for what I've given them. Every time the Thebans are thrown back, the Tebbans realize how valuable I am, and pay homage to me."

"Is the man a perfect example of conceit," Walker wondered, "or is he actually magnificent?"

"Anything for a laugh," he said shortly. "I suppose your people will be as startling as the city itself?"

"We'll see," Freeman's voice said, "look at the wall before you."

BEFORE he had finished speaking, the green wall changed to a blank silver screen. Walker backed away wonderingly. A strange, magnificent scene flashed before him. At first he thought he was staring directly into a vast, circular amphitheater. In its center was an immense stone image of Nick Freeman. The image was bathed in pale green light. Kneeling on terraces, arranged about the statue, were thousands of the most powerful looking men and women Walker had ever seen. They were staring at the statue with a reverence that no God could have produced. As he watched, there was no sound. No movement marred the picture. The room seemed without a ceiling, lost in a display of weird, emerald light.

Then it was gone and he knew that by some trick of lighting, he had not been looking at the actual scene at all, but at the solid wall.

"Telo-ray movies," Freeman explained abruptly. "Instead of the anti-

quoted moving pictures of your world, we use telo-rays to project any scene in the kingdom against a flat surface. A tiny and rather simple instrument does it. Wouldn't a telo-ray bring you a fortune if you could steal it from me?"

Walker winced. Freeman's continued reference to him as Jim Brawn was growing serious.

"But, of course, you're not Brawn," Freeman went on bitterly, "so you aren't interested in Tebba."

"On the contrary," Walker said, "I'm very interested. I'm wondering how a man who seems to be as brilliant as you can go on punishing me when he should know that it isn't uncommon on earth for two men to look alike."

Freeman hesitated. Then his voice reflected gratitude for the bit of flattery.

"Thank you," he said. "First, let me say that I don't believe a thing you've told me. Yet, there is a chance that I'm mistaken. I'm going to give you one opportunity to prove that you aren't Brawn. No one can invent complete history on the spur of the moment without betraying himself. Start talking. Tell me your life story. Leave out no detail. Somewhere you'll tell a lie that will betray you. It's your one chance. Take it."

Walker, eager to be believed, launched into a full story of his life. He left out no detail. He even mentioned the trouble he had had in earlier years because of his resemblance to Brawn. When he finished, he thought Freeman sounded impressed.

"One more question: Why did you visit Herbert Sells' office?"

Walker explained the automobile accident with McGillicuddy and how he had found Sells' name in the phone book. Freeman chuckled when he told how Sells had been on the verge of throwing him out.

"That sounds like Sells," Freeman

agreed. "He's the most conceited fool I've ever talked with."

Then solemnly:

"You've convinced me of one thing. You shall have a chance. I will study the scanner. If, by scanning the places where Brawn spends his time, we can find another man of your appearance, I'll bring him here to face you. Is that fair?"

Walker had no choice.

"It's a new way of saying the condemned man ate a hearty meal," he agreed. "At least I've got a chance, even though it is a long one."

"Good." A series of loud clicks sounded from the wall.

"Turn around."

WALKER turned quickly. Where a few moments before there had been a wall, now the room he had first visited was before him. He recognized the scanner and the platform from which he had stumbled. Freeman was standing near the machine.

"I can speak to you from any part of the building." He said. "Sound, like light, carries from any part of Tebba when the telo-ray is in use."

He walked to the scanner and mounted the steps to a tiny platform. For several minutes Walker stood silently in the center of the room.

A humming sound came from the machine. The four foot globe beneath the scanner's 'eye' started to revolve. He watched it as the relief map of the United States quivered into place under the 'eye' and then rotated it gently back and forth.

"The globe," Freeman said in a pre-occupied voice, "contains powerful radi-
onic tubes. It is, in essence, actually the earth that you see. This globe, tuned perfectly to the actual world, gives me a chance to study any tiny point on earth by adjusting the posi-

tion and the eye of the machine."

A hissing sound came from the platform behind Walker. It was covered by a dense steamy mist. The mist grew thicker until it blotted out the entire end of the room.

"I have studied Brawns' home," Freeman said in a tired voice. "I have followed a trail to all his familiar haunts. He is at none of them."

"Odd . . ." Walker mused.

Freeman looked up suddenly, his eyes narrowed.

"Why?" He asked. "How can a man be in Tebba and on earth at the same time?"

Walker stood his ground. To speak now would be useless.

Freeman was toying with the levers on the scanner once more. He was silent for some time.

"Wait!" A touch of excitement was in his voice. "Out of curiosity I have returned the scanner to the apartment where I picked you up. I wonder . . . ?"

His voice trailed off, Walker's heart started to jump unreasonably.

"I'd never believe it." Freeman said in an awed voice.

"Neither would I." Walker growled. "Cut out the secrets will you?"

Freeman seemed not to hear.

"In the scanner," he said, "I picked up a man approaching the apartment. I've followed him inside. Brawn, either your the smartest man I've ever met, and I think you are, or someone is a damned fool."

He stared at Walker over the sights of the machine.

"I'll give you three guesses," Walker said dryly. "That's what I've been trying to tell you. Your the prize . . ."

"Be quiet." Freeman snapped. "The man in the scanner is a perfect copy of you. I suppose it is possible that you told the truth? Still, if you did, how did Brawn find his way to your

apartment?"

Somehow Walker thought he knew. At least he could guess.

"How did I find my way to Sells' office?" he asked. "Couldn't Sells have told Brawn about me? Couldn't Brawn have wanted to see me for some reason?"

Freeman seemed badly puzzled.

"Hardly," he said. "If Brawn went to the apartment of a strange man, would he be acting as though he owned the place? Would he wear another man's bath-robe and use his shaving equipment?"

WALKER couldn't pretend to understand that. At this moment he didn't care if Brawn carried the whole apartment down the river and tossed it in.

Somehow he had to get Brawn here, before Freeman. He had to prove it was Brawn who was still on earth.

"Could I have told my story as convincingly as I did if I didn't know Robert Walker and his past?" he pleaded. "Didn't you promise to give me a chance, if you could find another man of my physical appearance?"

The argument was too much for Nick Freeman. He leaned tensely over the scanner, studying the vision again carefully.

"You'll get your chance," he said tersely, and yanked a lever down hard. "Get ready to face your double, Brawn. He'll prove you a liar, if I can't."

The mist over the platform started to stir lazily. The room grew dim and the world globe under the scanner started to spin wildly. A figure became visible in the mist on the platform. A man cried out in pain and staggered forward out of nowhere.

He sprawled full length on the floor, eyes wide with fright, staring up into Bob Walker's face.

At the same time, Bob Walker saw the red-ray sweep toward him and felt a powerful sleepiness overtake him. He was aware of Freeman's voice, far away and reassuring.

"You will have your trial. Until then, you must not be left together."

Then he was drifting, with the sensation of falling but without the pain of hitting anything solid.

CHAPTER VII

Cell of the Silver Square

THE room was small and without furniture. Walker faced Jim Brawn. He knew that when he left this room it would be as a free man, or a prisoner facing death. He knew, also, that Brawn must recognize Freeman. Thus far, Brawn had played his part well.

What Walker did not know, was that Brawn had already made his plans. He knew Freeman, of course, but had little idea of where he was or how Freeman could be here, safe and seemingly very powerful.

Brawn was clever. He had been unable to speak at first. Now that he had recovered from the shock, he could guess why he was faced with another who seemed to be his identical twin. Perhaps Freeman could have handled the situation more cleverly, but in Freeman's mind one man was already condemned. Bringing a second visitor to Tebba had been a gesture born from his love of fair play.

He faced them both.

"You have been drugged and brought here, to awaken in my presence. You haven't spoken to each other. I am interested in finding out which of you is James Brawn."

A crafty gleam showed for an instant in Brawn's eyes. Freeman had tipped his hand. From now on it would be

easy.

"Brawn and I have certain things to talk over," Freeman continued. "Robert Walker will go free. I have already heard one story. Now I will hear yours."

He turned toward the real Brawn. The newcomer acted surprised and a little humble.

"I—I don't think I understand. If this isn't some crazy dream, perhaps you will explain? Who is this man who looks like me? Where am I?"

It sounded so innocent, that Freeman smiled, satisfied that he had been right from the first.

"Your name?" He asked curtly.

"Walker," Brawn said quickly. "Robert Quincy Walker. The Robert came from my father, an Idaho farmer, and the Quincy, from my grandfather."

It was Bob Walker's turn to stare with astonished eyes at the newcomer.

"How in the devil . . . ?"

Brawn smiled.

"Does it surprise you that I know my name and my relatives?" he asked calmly. He didn't add that he owed a vote of thanks to the contents of Walker's trunk. The birth records were all there and if he ever needed the information he had digested, he needed it now.

Freeman shot a look of triumph at Walker.

"Go on," he told Brawn, "your name is Walker. I know that much. Tell me your whole story."

The real Bob Walker was forced to stand silently, unable to argue, while James Brawn quietly gave Walker's family history. Brawn was wrong on a few details, but right so often, that Walker wondered if this was all a farce.

Brawn talked on and on until Freeman finally nodded.

"Enough," he said abruptly. "We are getting nowhere. You two might be twins, so far as the stories you tell

are concerned."

"Now see here," Brawn feigned anger, "I've been doing all the talking. Suppose you two start in. What the hell is this all about? Do you realize kidnapping is a serious business? I'll get a lawyer on your tail who'll make it plenty hot . . ."

"Be quiet," Freeman shouted, "I must think."

Brawn subsided, but continued to glare at Bob Walker.

"I leave it up to the pair of you. How can I decide who is James Brawn?"

Walker started to speak, but Brawn's shouting drowned his voice.

"Who the hell *wants* you to find James Brawn," he cried. "I for one, am satisfied with being just plain Robert Walker. Brawn, whoever he is, can keep his precious name."

FREEMAN was staring steadily at Bob Walker. It was evident that the real Brawn was winning the argument. Somehow Brawn's voice had power over Freeman. A power, Walker guessed, that was working in Brawn's favor now, just as it had so many times in the past.

"If you think . . . ?" Walker started heatedly.

Freeman held his hand up for silence.

"I am no longer guessing," he said in a calm, emotionless voice. "I was sure I had chosen the correct man the first time. Now, after comparing your stories, I'm sure the newcomer *is* Robert Walker. I can only rely on the things I *feel*, in making the decision. I found you in Herbert Sells' office and your story of how you came to be there sounded foolish. I found the newcomer in his own apartment, acting as a man does when he *belongs* in a certain place.

"I'm sorry, Brawn, but the last man to come, Robert Walker, will have an opportunity to return to his home, or

remain here and help me in any manner he sees fit. There is still room in Tebba for fine men.

"As for you, the punishment I planned has not been altered. I'm sure that you are Jim Brawn. *As Jim Brawn, you will pay for what you did to me on earth. Is that clear?*"

Bob Walker could control his temper no longer.

"It's damned clear, that you're the most bull-headed, addle-brained pantywaist I've ever knocked the tar out of," he howled and sprang forward.

Nick Freeman dodged expertly, shouting a single command.

"Dispose of him."

Walker saw the two husky, plainly dressed men who sprang toward him from the door. He tried to check his rush forward. It was too late.

He felt the steel grip on his left arm, turned and aimed a hay-maker at the jaw of his captor. He never landed the blow. His arm was jerked backward by the guard and he fell to his knees with a moan. He was sure his arm was being torn out at the shoulder.

Clawing and kicking, he managed to turn until he could see the smiling, satisfied faces of Nick Freeman and Jim Brawn staring down at him.

"God help you if I ever . . ." His voice rose to a cry of pain as they twisted his arm higher behind his back. The room reeled around before him and he could see only Brawn's face, leering at him. He jerked once more to free himself and fainted.

NICK FREEMAN turned to the man he thought was Robert Walker.

"I feel that an explanation is due you. You were brought here to Tebba by mistake. I should have known Brawn would lie to me, as he always did. I will make arrangements to return you

to earth at once."

James Brawn had made many decisions during the past half hour. At first, though he recognized Nick Freeman, he had kept his mouth closed. The very fact that both he and Walker were brought here, warned Brawn that Freeman might have made an error.

Now he was safe, at least for the time being. He knew only what Nick Freeman had told him years ago, when Freeman perfected the machine which threw him onto this plane. Brawn had held the power of returning Freeman to Chicago, but he had destroyed the machine.

"This place fascinates me," Brawn said. "It's so strange. You seem able to do whatever you wish here. Is Tebba, I believe that's what you called it, under your command?"

Brawn had struck a soft spot in Nick's heart.

"Tebba," Freeman said with great pride, "is finer than any of the cities on earth. The people were able to grasp my ideas and have produced results beyond anything the world ever dreamed of.

"I have long wished for company here. The ruling building belongs to me and no one is allowed to enter except the servants. At times it's very dull. Perhaps," his eyes were shining eagerly, "you would like to stay and work with me."

Brawn tried to hide the feeling of pleasure that swept through him. This was the chance he had waited for. An easy escape from earth and another opportunity to exploit Nick Freeman. He had done it before. What would prevent him from out-smarting poor, glibbie Nick again?

"I'd be very grateful for the chance," he answered. "On earth, I had to work in a factory. It wasn't an especially pleasant existence."

"I know. Brawn kept me locked behind laboratory doors for hours on end." His eyes grew bitter. "You saw them take Brawn away. He's going to get a taste of the way he made me suffer. Tebba hasn't always been kind to me. I had hard days here at first."

He launched into a complete explanation of how he had followed both men with the scanner and brought them here. Brawn listened closely, thanking his lucky star that he *had* gone to Walker's apartment and lived as Walker lived.

"I'm thankful that you are a good judge of men," he said when Freeman had finished. "Personally, I don't think I could have made such a decision. We both told the same story. Brawn must have known a great deal about me."

Freeman chuckled.

"Brawn is a clever man," he admitted. "Perhaps it was your voice and your mannerisms that convinced me of your innocence. There is something very straightforward, very compelling in your voice."

"Yes," Brawn thought, *"I've always had a voice and manner that would sway you, Nick. Thank God it didn't fail this time."*

"Thank you," he said aloud. "I appreciate what you've done and I understand why you had to be sure. If you have use for me, I'll be delighted to stay in Tebba."

Nick Freeman grasped his hand.

"And Tebba's secrets will be explained to you. Perhaps," he added with a friendly grin, "you'll take my place one of these days."

Brawn smiled.

"I shall look forward to that day," he said, then under his breath, *"and I'll be making plans—very careful plans."*

BOB WALKER opened his eyes slowly, then closed them quickly,

clutching the uncertain support under him.

A man could not float in the air.

Yet, he seemed to be floating in space over the city of Tebba. Nothing but a small, square of silver kept him from falling to his death.

This, then, was Freeman's torture device? He lay very still, eyes closed, almost afraid to look again. Then, opening them, he stared up at the queer, emerald sky that washed in layers thousands of feet above. His hands were flat against the silvery square, his finger tips reaching almost to the edge of it. He turned slowly, and the square remained steady. He stared down and his heart leaped wildly. His muscles grew taut.

Under the silvery square, there was a drop of five hundred feet to the roof of the highest tower. He must be drugged. Must be in a trance that produced this nightmare. Yet, his body obeyed his commands. His eyes were clear. The square under him remained a solid, tangible thing against which he crouched.

Walker lay quietly for several minutes. The sky above was limpid, flowing green. The city, as he had seen it before, resembled many stupendous granite blocks, piled upon each other. There was no sign of life above or below.

He started to shiver violently. It wasn't cold, but goose-pimples stood out on his bare flesh. He tried to think clearly; to analyze his own thoughts. It was useless. His mind kept plunging back to the fantastic little square of silver glass which held him from dropping to death.

What had Nick Freeman done? What weird power enabled him, like a super Mandrake, to suspend Walker in mid-air above the city?

It was impossible to concentrate upon

any subject. Try as he might to lie still, Walker found it impossible to do so. Perhaps it would be his own curiosity that would destroy him. A longing to gain knowledge so often proved fatal to others who moved from the beaten track.

In spite of his fear and helplessness, Walker had to know if this were a freak of nature, or if Nick Freeman had perfected some way of defying gravity.

Perspiration stood in beads on his forehead. His arms were wet and his muscles felt as though they were being drawn on the torture rack. Slowly he felt toward the edge of the silver square.

His fingers went beyond the visible edge, and yet they touched something with a hard surface, and did not slip off.

There was substance beyond the square on which he lay.

He relaxed slightly, but the fear did not vanish.

How far did the substance reach? How far could he move before plunging downward? He turned carefully on his side. He felt ahead of him and started to crawl from the square.

The moment he left the visible floor, he suffered from a terrible dizziness. It was like crawling on your hands and knees, across a clear spot in the sky. He backed to the square once more and sat down.

He choked back his anger and tried to reason it out. What manner of inhuman device was it? He wished he had devoted at least a portion of his life to science. *Popular Science* was as far as his education in the field had ever gone. There hadn't been any mention in his favorite magazine of a man being suspended in mid-air. It was the most amazing thing he ever dreamed of.

He couldn't stay there. There must be some method of escape. Walker wished he had a story-book character's

ability to get out of impossible places. There were no written rules for a man wanting to climb safely through nothing, from a small perch high in the sky.

"Click!"

THE slight sound sent chills running up and down his spine. He crouched low, seeking a foothold that didn't exist. Suppose the silver square had cracked? Perhaps Freeman planned for him to hang here until his nerves were shattered, then send him falling to his death.

He listened for a long time, but there were no further sounds. The sky was darkening. Not as night would darken earth's sky, but instead, a deepening of the green color. Dense green clouds rolled down until they were but a few yards above his head. Then for some unexplainable reason, they parted above him and a clear space remained over his head.

His fear gradually grew dull. He had to know how far he could go without falling. To look below him caused an unbearable dizziness. Closing his eyes tightly, he crawled from the square on his hands and knees. His hands, placed well in front of him, continued to contact a hard, glassy substance. He moved for a short distance, opened his eyes and looked back at the silver square. He wanted to stand up and dash back to safety.

He could sit in that one spot until hell cracked, but it wouldn't help him escape.

Gritting his teeth savagely, he closed his eyes and started to move farther away from the square. He had gone another dozen feet when a feminine voice startled him.

"You need not be frightened. You cannot fall."

Walker jumped to his feet, lost the contact his hands had given him and

started to fall.

A deep, musical laugh made him forget where he was. He stood with feet spread wide apart, a scowl of bewilderment on his face.

"Where the hell . . . ?"

The laugh came again. Then before his astonished gaze, a light crack appeared ahead of him. It widened, and became an open door. Behind the door, as though it too were part of the suspended square, was a hall much like the one he had wandered through once before.

Walker had given up trying to understand what this was all about. He *did* understand that the girl who faced him in the open door was the loveliest thing he had ever seen.

"You did not hear me when I first opened the door of your cell."

He remembered the strange 'click' he had heard a few moments before. The girl walked toward him quickly.

"For the love of Mike, what is this sky-going torture chamber? I was about ready to apply for a pair of wings."

The girl had moved from the hall into the place where Walker was imprisoned. She carried a covered dish which she placed before him. When she straightened again, her eyes opened wide with amazement.

"You are not a man of Tehha," she cried, "nor are you from my own beloved city."

Walker wasn't interested in her history just then. Since she had first appeared, he couldn't help staring at the slim, well built figure and the perfectly proportioned oval face.

She was clad in a plain, but well fitted brown robe that fell gracefully to her ankles. Tiny feet with painted nails were partly covered with thonged-sandals. Her hair, a chestnut brown, was done about her head in a tight

knot, looking as though it might reach her waist, were it released.

"No . . ." he said falteringly, "I'm not Tehhan, vegetable or fish. When does Nick Freeman plan to take me out of here?"

She turned a startled gaze toward the outer hall.

"You don't have to be afraid of talking up here," Walker said a little caustically. "We've got the whole sky to ourselves."

The girl stared down at the rooftops and laughed nervously.

"The illusion *is* startling, isn't it?"

"Illusion?" The word fairly exploded from Walker's lips.

"Yes, . . ." she hesitated, then nodded her head quickly, as though she had made a decision. "Free-Man constructed this tower of torture for those who must be punished. I understand that he is really a gentle man. He can prepare tortures that will do no harm to a strong man, while they completely destroy a person with a weak or guilty mind."

"You say *this* is an illusion?"

THE girl held a finger to her lips.

"Be quiet. Others might hear. I don't know why I talk to you. I am told not to speak to the prisoners. Perhaps," she blushed, "it is because you are not a common Tehhan. Perhaps, because my heart tells me I have met one who can help us."

"How," Walker asked eagerly. "I'll do anything. Get me down off this flag-pole act."

"Be quiet and listen. Soon I must leave. This room is a part of the tower. From the outside of your cell, you will see solid halls and passages to the lower level. The walls of the cell are of rock. Inside, Free-Man has constructed the walls, floor and ceiling of a special glass which he invented. The prisoner can

see out in every direction, but no one can see in. The prisoner is placed on the silver square. If he is guilty, he becomes frightened and his mind weakens. He goes mad before he dares leave the square."

She hesitated, smiling at him with open admiration.

"Of three dozen men placed on the silver square, you are the first to dare leave it. If you were a Tebban, Free-Man would release you at once. He must bear some special malice toward you. He has sent food. In a few hours, you will be placed in another cell."

"And," Walker added, "compared with the second, the silver-square has been duck-soup. Is that right?"

She nodded, then came close and placed a cool hand on his arm. Her nails bit into his flesh. Her eyes were troubled and uncertain.

"Where did you come from?"

"From earth," he said. "Freeman brought me here. He's made a terrible mistake."

She released her grip hurriedly and backed away. Her lips parted in wonder.

"Earth? You came from the home of Free-Man?"

Walker chuckled half-heartedly.

"I came the hard way," He said. "Freeman yanked me in by the scruff of my neck. I didn't come because I wanted to."

She remained standing stiffly before him. She seemed fascinated by his words.

"Earth-man, are you an enemy of Free-Man?"

Walker thought of the deal Freeman had pulled on him and his fists clenched.

"I'd like to stuff a fist down his throat," he said in a low voice.

The servant girl sank to her knees, head bent forward, clutching the cuff of his trousers.

"You are an enemy of Free-Man and a man from his world. Would you escape, if I arranged it?"

Walker drew away from her. He felt like a fool.

"Look here," he gulped. "Sure I want to escape. Get up, will you? I'm not accustomed to being treated like a God."

She rose slowly, backing away a respectful distance.

"We have planned an invasion. We had only to wait for another person like Free-Man to guide us. If we help you escape from the city of Tebba, will you lead us?"

Walker stared at her with blank amazement.

"You're not a Tebban? You were captured and brought here also?"

She shook her head sadly.

"I have never seen the All-Powerful Earth. Free-Man has spread its wonderful doctrines among us."

"Then who are you? Why are you fighting against Nick Freeman?"

Her eyes blazed with hatred. She stood very still, arms at her sides, chin tilting proudly.

"I am a prisoner. A servant girl, Princess Lonna Arnoo of Theba. Plans are completed to return me to my own people. Will you escape with me?"

Theba?

WALKER remembered Nick Freeman's exact words, when Freeman spoke to him about the unsuccessful attack of the Theban's on Tebba.

"The puny efforts of the Thebans—they'll be back for another try, but it will be useless. Every time the Thebans are thrown back, the Tebbans realize how valuable I am and pay homage to me."

Perhaps, Walker thought, the Thebans aren't so dumb after all. Freeman said the people here were splendid at copying ideas. That their weakness lay

in originating new products and machines.

Did he have the ability to guide a great city in a war against Tehba?

It would be worth a lot to get a chance to kick Nick Freeman in the seat of his pants.

Walker's thoughts were drawn back to the girl suddenly. She was regarding him with thoughtful eyes. He remembered how she had gone to her knees before him, and blushed.

"I'll escape with you," he said quietly. "I'll do the best I can to help the Thehans."

She smiled radiantly.

"Wait for the sound of the twelfth bell. Be prepared for flight."

She was gone. The door closed, leaving Walker with a strange feeling of being suspended in the air once more. He stared downward for a long time at the gradually darkening roofs of Tehba. For the first time since the strange meeting in the room that housed the scanner, he felt that he had a chance to live.

Nick Freeman's torture chamber wasn't so bad, now that he knew he couldn't fall. At least he had one friend in this strange place, and probably many of them.

Although he was to wait for the sound of the twelfth bell, he hadn't heard anything, much less a ringing bell, since he awakened in this open-air sanitarium.

He returned to the silver square and sat down cross legged. He waited silently for what seemed many hours, yet there was no break in the intolerable silence.

In centuries past, men had been driven crazy by the sound of a huge bell ringing slowly in their ears. Was Freeman trying the opposite method?

Perhaps the girl had been sent here by Freeman himself. Perhaps she had

been told to inform Walker that he must listen for the tolling of a non-existent bell.

He was getting jittery. What would happen to a man who sat hour after hour, day after day, listening for a sound that never came?

Freeman was clever. Damned clever. Walker dreamed of the lovely servant girl and finally added another name to his list of people who deserved a poke in the puss.

Princess Lonna, was she? More likely one of Freeman's little playmates, sent for the deliberate purpose of adding another inch of hell to his short life.

So Freeman thought he was strong, to resist the punishment of the invisible cell? Well, he'd damned well find out that his prisoner wasn't going to lay awake for a week listening for a hell that didn't ring.

Walker rolled over on his side, tried to find some comfort on the hard floor and closed his eyes.

He sought sleep, but it was useless. His mind was conjuring up all the hells that he had ever seen. The silence was so terrible that he imagined church bells, school bells and factory bells, all clanging in unison.

He tried to work off his anger with choice oaths, but it was impossible. He couldn't escape the nightmare of sounds that sleep brought. He tossed and turned uneasily on the silver square; while night, deep and velvety, closed over him and the city of Tehba.

CHAPTER VIII

"They Have Escaped"

JIM BRAWN relaxed comfortably in Nick Freeman's finest chambers. He lay very still, staring up at the ceiling. The room, one of six which Freeman had presented him, was at least

fifty feet square. Its center was occupied by a huge bed, large enough to hold half a dozen normal sized men. The mattress was of soft fluffy material that promoted comfort almost beyond imagination.

Brawn could testify to the perfection of the bed, for he had spent hours on its broad surface. Refreshed and able to think clearly once more, he tried to plan the opening of his campaign.

Freeman was lonely. He had given Brawn the best of everything. Brawn chuckled, reached for his hat on a nearby table and hauled it tightly over his eyes. Now he could concentrate.

The suite in which he lived covered an entire floor of Freeman's building. By walking through certain ultra-violet contacts and breaking the steady beam, Brawn could step to numerous balconies from which he had perfect views of all parts of Tehba.

"One of my plans has been to provide complete comfort," Freeman explained. "If you are to stay with me, Walker, I want you to have the finest Tehba can give. These rooms, the bath, the bed, the lounges, are different than anything you have ever seen. Why not? I have sprawled my living quarters over much space, because the space was here and I longed to live as one does in a dream, without anything to hold me in cramped quarters."

Brawn chuckled. Freeman always had a horror for small places. His mind didn't function well in small rooms. Brawn knew that he must learn much more about Tehba before he dared act upon his own initiative. Complete freedom to wander about as he wished was a necessity. The huge rooms were a fine start. Next, he must see Tehba and understand more of its people.

The soft clicking of an outer door disturbed him. Sitting quietly, he waited. Footsteps crossed the outer room

and hesitated at his door.

"Are you hungry?"

He looked up in amazement to catch the bewildered eyes of a lovely servant girl. She seemed about to drop the tray of fruits which she carried. Staring at him steadily, she caught her breath and crossed the room to the divan. While Brawn stared in open admiration, she placed the tray at his side and backed away.

"Don't hurry," he begged. "I haven't seen anything as lovely as you for a long time."

She paused, still staring at him as though he were a ghost.

"How did you get here?"

Brawn grinned and chose an apple from the tray. He polished it on his sleeve and took a large bite. Chewing slowly, he studied the girl from head to foot.

"I'm a new boss around here," he said with a grin. "I suppose Freeman told you to take care of me?"

She held the same fixed stare, repeating her first question mechanically.

"How did you get here?"

The little devil was persistent. Brawn rolled over lazily, let his hat fall to the floor, and stood up. He started toward her, but she backed to the door.

"Look here, baby," he said. "How I came here is none of your damned business. If you want to know, I came in a white coach, drawn by sixteen pink elephants. Now, will you be nice and tell me your name?"

He had never seen such horror written on a human face. She knew that he was making fun of her and her eyes blazed.

"You were—were making sport of me before, even as you do now?"

In Brawn's mind something cleared. No wonder the kid was startled. He hadn't seen her before, yet she thought they had met. Walker was still around

somewhere. The solution was clear.

She had seen Walker and thought Brawn and Walker were the same.

"Sure," he said easily. "I like to kid little girls. Make a pleasant habit of it, in fact. Now, are we friends?"

She didn't answer his question. She continued to regard him with terror.

"*You are not an enemy of Free-Man?*"

Brawn chuckled.

"Freeman is my best pal," he said, "probably one of the *finest* friends I've ever had."

The girl turned away from him in panic and ran toward the door.

"Hey! Wait!" Brawn started to follow, then stopped. She had already disappeared into the hall. "Well, I'll be damned. What's eating *her*?"

FAR under the last of the seven levels of Tebba, hidden among the giant pipes that conducted power for the protector-ray, was a small, miserable hut. Down from the seventh level, hundreds of feet from the surface, came the slaves of Tebba. There were only a few of them who had been captured during early raids against Tebba, and thrown into service for Free-Man.

The tall, battle-scarred son of King Arnoo had served longer than the rest. His name was Tanner, and it was he who had conceived the plan for the escape.

The trip from the seventh level was made through a maze of pipes, across muddy earth, to the hut that had once served as headquarters for the builders.

Tanner was here, lean and whip-marked. Tanner, the finest warrior of Tebba, held in slavery because his race did not have the mentality to invent weapons that matched Free-Man's.

Tanner was seated in one corner of the room, his back to the wall, heels dug into the earth floor. Around him,

their faces eager in the lamp-light, were his followers.

"Tonight we will escape!" Tanner's voice held a spirit that had not been evident for months. "The boats are ready. Our men wait for us at the edge of the fire-desert. We wait only for Lonna. As soon as she comes . . ."

The low whistle of the fire-bird came from among the pipes outside the room. Tanner sprang eagerly to his feet.

"She has come! Make ready!"

The men about him arose quickly and left the room. Outside, only the eerie splash of water filled the cavern. The power pipes, interlaced with each other, ran away in all directions, to lose themselves under tons of muck and debris.

Along the single trail from the upper level, Lonna came. She was swathed from head to foot in heavy, brown cloth. Her step was light and swift. Behind her came the last guard, lantern held in his hand.

"You are ready? No one followed you?"

Tanner was at his sister's side, leaning over her, his hand on her arm.

There was no smile of triumph on her face. Only a sadness he had not expected to see.

"I am ready," she said tonelessly.

Her voice startled him. He placed a lean finger under her chin and drew her face up until it was plainly visible in the dim light. At once his voice was concerned.

"*Someone has harmed you?*"

"No one. Let us hurry. It is close to the twelfth bell."

She drew away from him hurriedly and went across the opening to where men were busy removing a large, flat section from the top of a pipe. They worked feverishly. When Lonna arrived, the section slipped off and fell.

"The boats," Tanner ordered, "bring them!"

FROM behind the hut, men carried two long, poorly fashioned boats. They were built of odd bits of wood and fabric and shaped like scows. One after the other, they slipped into the pipe, hung there, swinging against the current at the end of long thongs.

"The Princess goes first," one of the escaping slaves said.

Lonna hesitated, staring at her brother.

"We return to our people, but it is useless. Tonight I thought I had salvation in my hands. Now, it has slipped away again."

Tanner scowled.

"It is nonsense; but for a while, I thought the white man would come with us; thought he would fight for Theba."

"What?"

Tanner scrambled up the pipe and grasped her arm roughly. He drew her near to him, his eyes glowing fiercely.

"You have not told Free-Man of our plans?"

A murmur of fear arose from the small group. She struggled away from him.

"Tanner, sometimes I think you are a fool. No! It was the prisoner in the tower who wanted to escape. He promised to help us in our battle."

Tanner's face lighted with interest.

"Why didn't you bring him?"

A tear rolled down Lonna's face.

"He betrayed me. He pretended to be a friend. Later I found him resting in Free-Man's finest apartment."

"Wait." Tanner sat down on the pipe and drew her down to his side. "There is something here that sounds wrong. Tell me the entire story. And don't hesitate to make it the truth. I want to know."

The girl told him of her meeting with Robert Walker and of the promise he had made. Tanner kept nodding eagerly. When she spoke of her visit to

Jim Brawn's rooms, Tanner clenched his fists and swore softly.

"I would like to twist his neck."

"I would not, if I were you, Highness."

Tanner turned. The guard who had waited for Lonna stood on the pipe near the opening to the boats.

"And why not?" Tanner challenged.

"I was in the building of the Free-Man today when he condemned the prisoner to the tower," the guard said excitedly. "There are two of them."

Tanner was impatient.

"Two of what?"

"Don't you see, Highness? Two men who look alike. One of them is Free-Man's friend and the most trusted assistant. The prisoner that Princess Lonna saw in the tower, is *truly* a prisoner. I'll wager he awaits us at this moment."

Tanner pivoted toward his sister.

"The story may be true," he whispered. "Quickly, what is the time?"

Lonna looked at the tiny instrument hanging about her neck.

"It is half after the eleventh bell. We have but a few minutes."

THE warmth in her voice convinced him. He did not realize that Lonna had a dual purpose in wanting to see the stranger rescued. The guard's words had given new hope to her. Perhaps, after all, the one who had impressed her so greatly was honest. Was waiting for her.

"Good," Tanner replied hurriedly.

"Listen to me closely. The pipe carries water to the power plant. At the ringing of the twelfth bell, it is turned off. For exactly twenty minutes, the current backs up swiftly toward the reserve tank at the edge of the fire-desert. During that time, the boats will drift to safety. After that time, the water lies dormant until morning. Then it will

be sucked swiftly back to the power house. If we do not escape while the water flows to the desert, we will lie in the pipe for hours and be sucked to certain death when the day comes again."

Lonna nodded.

"What shall we do?"

"I will take three men and go for the prisoner. If we are not back promptly at the twelfth bell, you are to leave. Understand?"

Lonna knew better than question her brother's judgment.

A shudder passed through her slim body.

"You will not fail?"

He kissed her lightly on the cheek.

"I will not fail!"

He chose three men quickly and disappeared into the darkness, up the incline toward the seventh level.

BOB WALKER had awakened at the sound of the first bell.

He sat up, startled at the clear, loud sound that swelled until he was sure that the bell had actually sounded and had not been a part of his dream.

The girl had given her promise in good faith.

He stood up on the silver square, stretched carefully and yawned. He still couldn't make himself wander around the room without that fear of height returning. He knew it was a cell and he knew that there was no danger of falling; but to look down made him dizzy and sick.

Approximately a half hour passed before the sound of the second bell came. Then he knew the meaning of the sound. Evidently time was not recorded in Tebba until night. The first bell had sounded just after nightfall. That would mean, if the bells continued to ring every half hour, he had to be patient until midnight.

The next few hours were the longest Walker had ever spent. There was nothing to relieve the monotony of the invisible room. He had no way of knowing whether or not the girl was coming. There was still a chance that Freeman himself would come at the sound of the twelfth bell, and take him to another torture chamber.

Walker sat very still, ears alert to pick up any foreign sound. Once or twice he dozed. At last, when he had slept for some minutes, the eleventh bell rang. He had never heard a more lonely, desolate sound. The huge bell sent its message across what looked to be a city of the dead.

Walker stared out at the blackened sky, waiting, praying that his hopes would not be in vain.

Footsteps sounded softly somewhere beyond his sight. Slow, stealthy footsteps, scraping along a stone floor.

Something scraped against the outer side of the door.

"Prisoner of the invisible cell, you spoke to Lonna?"

Walker gulped.

"Yes."

"You know why Lonna planned to come back? Where she is going to take you?"

It was a test to determine his loyalty.

"We were to escape to Theba," he whispered eagerly.

"You are willing to become our ally? You know that death is the penalty if you betray us?"

"Yes," Walker whispered hoarsely. "*For Heaven's sake, hurry, will you?*"

"Good!"

The door opened. He winced and held his hand over his eyes as the bright light hit his face. Then, able to see again, he studied the youth before him. Tanner was impressive to his own people. To a stranger, he appeared to be a giant of sinew and strength. Flashing

adventurous eyes swept eagerly over Bob Walker's figure. When he spoke again, it was with deep respect.

"You *are* an earth man. You say that you are an enemy of Free-Man?"

Walker nodded, and Tanner took his arm quickly.

Once in the large, well lighted corridor, Walker breathed a sigh of relief. The invisible cell had been hell, even after he knew for a certainty that he could come to no harm within its walls. Any man, faced by what appeared to be empty space, would probably lose all sense of reason in time.

Tanner still retained his grasp on Walker's arm, pulled him hurriedly along the hall. They hesitated before a series of panels built into the wall. Tanner turned, his eyes suddenly cold as ice, his expression that of a man who faced death and reckoned with it with his brain and his muscle.

"Our only escape to the lower levels," he said evenly, "is in the boxes which rise and fall. The guard in the third box has been disposed of. However, the alarm brings them all up the shafts. We must risk that."

Elevators, Walker thought. Freeman's contribution to Tebba, or one of them, was the boxes that "rise and fall." Tanner pressed the call button. Together they stood well away from the wall, facing the doors. Over the doors, tiny green lights appeared. The light indicated that elevators three, five and six were rising at once.

Walker felt something hard being pressed into his hand. He looked down at a tiny pistol.

"Watch box six," Tanner said calmly. "I will watch the other. If they arrive before three, we must destroy the guards who operate them."

WALKER had never waited so anxiously for an elevator in his

life. The green lights continued to flash their warning. Then, with a metallic click, the door to six opened and he faced a slim, pale faced man dressed in the same tight fitting black garment that Freeman had worn at their first meeting. There came a panicky moment when Walker could not force himself to pull the trigger. The guard saw immediately that something was wrong. He lunged forward, a frightened expression on his thin face, trying to draw the heavy pistol from his belt.

"Quick," Tanner shouted. "It is our only . . ."

"Swish!"

Walker pressed the trigger and felt the sudden wrench of his shoulder as a white flame seared the guard's face. There was no time for the man to cry out. He sank down slowly, reluctant to give up life. Walker staggered back, sick at heart, to see the door to number three thrown open. Tanner was behind him, pushing him hurriedly into the car. Walker recognized one of the three men who waited in the car. It was one of the guards who had brought him to the tower.

"Hurry!" Tanner sprang to the controls and jerked the lever around a full turn. "Have you been discovered at the first level?"

One of the men shook his head grimly.

"We waited at the bottom of the shaft until a call came from this level," he said. "They will find the dead man soon. It is almost time for the Princess to make her escape."

Tanner frowned.

"I know," he said. "We will go the way we came. One of you will remain until you are sure we are not being followed."

The man who Walker had first seen in Freeman's room, stepped away from the rest. He was a heavy-built,

freckled-faced fellow with a mass of red hair that fell about his ears.

"I will protect the flank," he said.

The car stopped abruptly and the door opened. Tanner led the way into another hall identical to the one they had just left. They moved along it quietly until they reached the first turn. No one was in sight. Walker wondered at the lack of guards and decided that Freeman depended on the elevators and their operators to protect the place. Ahead of them, about the distance of a block, the hall turned again. Tanner hurried along, Walker close behind him. The red haired man stopped at the first turn and leaned calmly against the wall. One would have thought he made a daily business of such escapes.

They were at the second turn now. Tanner, well in the lead, stopped abruptly. An oath escaped his lips. He halted, waiting for Walker to catch up.

BOB WALKER stopped in amazement. All the courage drained out of him. There, not ten feet ahead, the hall stopped. Beyond it was only space. In a distance were the tops of the buildings of Tebba. They were stranded at the end of a blind alley, perhaps two hundred feet above the city.

"But it cannot be," Tanner said in a puzzled voice. "We came this way. I made sure of the direction."

"SWISH"

Behind them came the sound of the red-head's weapon as it discharged flame.

"Swish-swish."

"Shoot him down and go on!" It was Jim Brawn's excited, angry voice. "There are others. He's protecting them."

Then came the sounds of men, many of them, rushing down the hall toward

the warrior Tanner had left behind. The hall was alive with running men. Brawn's voice arose above the others, urging them on.

"We can only hold out until Waunu is killed," Tanner whispered. "They'll rush us in the open hall."

Walker thought only of escaping; and if possible, helping the man they had left behind.

"But you said you came this way!" he cried.

Tanner shook his head.

"The Free-Man is clever," he groaned. "Somehow he confused us on the number of levels we traveled. It must have been below here that we came in. To jump from the end of this hall would be sure death."

Something in Tanner's reference to Freeman started a line of desperate thought in Walker's mind.

Freeman was clever. So was Brawn. Somehow Brawn had learned of the planned escape. It was he who led the force of guards against them. As he stood there, trying desperately to think, Waunu backed slowly toward them. He was limping badly, continuing to send a steady beam of flame back through the hall.

"Quick!" Walker cried. "Your fire-gun. Aim directly ahead of us into space and release your full power."

He raised his own weapon and pulled the trigger desperately. Tanner, without questioning him, fired in the same direction. Waunu, his red hair waving like a battle flag, turned away from his enemies and ran toward Tanner.

Under the fire of the two guns, Tebba seemed to fade, then crumple before them.

Then, with a loud crash of glass, the barrier fell and the hall stretched onward, an empty route to safety.

"It's like the cell of invisibility," Tanner shouted. "Another of Free-

Man's tricks."

He ran forward, hurdling the mass of rubble, with the others at his heels. Walker turned and sent a searing flame of death behind him into the approaching mob. Then, sure that the red-head Waunu was safe, he ran with the little strength that remained in him.

They reached the end of the hall and Tanner threw open the huge door that led out into the darkness. Now the tower was alive with guards. Somewhere in the halls they had left, a bell sounded and swelled until it could be heard for miles.

THEY were on a wide, well lighted street, and Walker knew it was hidden under one of the buildings he had seen from the sky. A small, covered cart stood in the shadows of the tower. Tanner ran toward it. Still badly shaken, Walker couldn't avoid noticing the wide streets which led away from the tower in all directions. The flow of pedestrians had suddenly halted at the sound of the warning bell, and were milling about excitedly. Tebba was a magnificent place but not for them, at this moment.

To Walker's surprise, Tanner hurried him into the cart. Walker, crouching under the dirty covering, wondered what was to come next. He heard Tanner's voice, speaking low, close to his ear.

"You are in a junk-cart. We are slaves and it is our task to clear the streets and carry the rubbish to the lowest level. Be quiet and do not show yourself."

Walker crouched close to the wooden floor. The wheels started to turn slowly on the pavement. He could picture Tanner and his men pushing the cart, hoping that they could reach safety before the guards recognized them. For a long time Walker did not move. All

about him the sounds of the excited mob grew in volume. Then they reached a quieter section of the city. The cart stopped. Cautiously he peeked from under the cover. They were all there, a brave group standing before a door like the elevator entrance in the tower. The door opened and Walker could see the interior of the car. It was about fifteen feet square, battered and dirty inside.

He heard Tanner's voice, speaking so low he could not distinguish the words. Then the door closed and the cart was dropping.

The car halted and the cart jolted backward. Down here it was dark. No ray of light penetrated the cover under which Walker was hidden.

"Out—quickly!" Tanner whispered. "We are late!"

Walker climbed stiffly from the cart. They were in semi-darkness, somewhere far below the street levels of Tebba. All about him were huge containers. Square, box like things that were filled to the brim with rubbish. It was toward one of these that Tanner ran. He climbed upward and jumped into the center of the stinking mass of junk. The others followed. Walker had no choice but to do the same. To his amazement, Tanner was on his knees, digging quickly into the stuff. Then, slipping downward, Tanner disappeared from sight.

At the bottom of the container was a small, square hole cut through solid rock. Below was a pit of silent blackness. Walker leaned forward, pushed his feet through the hole and let go. He felt the sudden painful snap of his knees and his head jerked forward as his feet hit solid earth.

"Help him find his way to the pipe." Tanner called back. "I will try to delay Lonna and her men."

Walker felt a hand on his arm and

moved forward through the murky darkness. His eyes were gradually accustoming themselves to the darkness. He could make out shadowy, spidery pipes which crossed and recrossed in this amazing underworld. They were on a path now. Water penetrated his shoes. He slogged forward, hearing the men ahead, still depending on the hand that grasped his arm.

He heard Tanner cry out somewhere. There was a quality of utter dread in Tanner's voice which stopped Walker in his tracks.

"They are gone!"

The tiny group stood on the water pipe, staring down at the surging water beneath them.

"Lonna was waiting with the boats," Tanner said. "Now we have no way to escape through the pipe. They will discover us before tomorrow night."

Walker stared downward at the half filled pipe.

"I don't know your plans. If we were to go this way, why can't we swim?"

Tanner's face mirrored his bewilderment. He looked quickly at the others, then back to Walker for an explanation.

"Swim?"

Walker's heart sank.

"You—can swim, can't you?"

Tanner shook his head.

"We don't know the meaning of the word."

Walker tried again.

"Can't we build another boat?"

WAUNU shook his head. "The water will lie dormant in a few minutes. Tanner will tell you."

Tanner repeated quickly what he had told Lonna.

"If we were caught in the pipe, we would all be destroyed."

If they stayed here, Walker thought, they'd die anyway. There was still a

chance.

"Listen," he said eagerly, "swimming isn't necessary. If we can take advantage of the current, you can paddle with your hands and keep your heads above water."

Tanner looked frightened. He turned to his men.

"None of us have ever thought of trusting ourselves in water," he said. "I am willing to try."

"If any of you get weak," Walker offered, "I'll do my best to help."

The red-head Waunu stepped forward.

"I am ready," he said. "How do I stay afloat?"

Walker showed him, making abrupt, powerful motions with his cupped hands.

"If you go below the surface, hold your breath until you come up."

"Without a word, Waunu stepped forward and jumped into the opening at the top of the pipe. Soundlessly, he was swept away in the swirling, angry water.

"Quickly," Walker said, "we must remain close together."

Without an instant's hesitation, Tanner followed Waunu. The others ran past Walker and fell into the water.

Walker took a quick breath and jumped. Water, like liquid ice, came up around his body. It threatened to knock the breath out of him. He was moving forward swiftly, paddling to keep his head up. There must be six feet of roaring water under him. It reminded him of a grim tunnel-of-love. He wondered if the others were still safe.

It seemed an endless journey. Once he heard someone ahead of him gasp for breath. Then five minutes passed, with the torture of hours. Forced forward by the current, he wondered at what moment he would lose his breath and

plunge to the bottom, end over end, to death.

Then the inky darkness faded and far ahead he saw light. It was a reddish, dull glare that looked like fire. He hoped that the guards had not discovered the door to the pit and figured out where they had gone.

A dark head became visible ahead of him. Then two more. He tried eagerly to spot a third. Yes, there was Tanner, bobbing up and down, gone for long seconds below the surface of the flood. Then Tanner's head failed to come up, and Walker's spirits sank.

He felt a cold, groping hand under him and clutched it desperately. Tanner had been hurt. Walker held the inert body under the arm pits and drew it to the surface. Tanner's face, close to his own, was white and lifeless. He held on, fighting to keep them both above water.

Waunu's carrot top swept out into open water ahead. The red-head thrashed about, trying to fight his way to the edge of the reserve tank. Then the remainder of them floated into the light, fighting for breath. Walker fought with his little remaining strength, to save Tanner's life.

"They have escaped. Help them, quickly!"

Blinded by the red glare, Walker could not mistake Lonna Arnoo's joyous, triumphant voice.

He heard something splash into the water close to him and lashed out toward it with his free arm. It was a rope. Holding on, fighting for a last breath, he felt himself drawn upward to the safety of a cold rock wall.

"Quickly! Place them in the boat. We are safe here for only a few moments."

Strong, dry arms were around him. He was lifted to a sturdy shoulder and the last strength fled from his exhausted

body. Walker closed his eyes. He could fight no more.

CHAPTER IX

Two Kings for Theba

WHEN Bob Walker awakened, he stared about at the room in which he lay with ill-concealed delight. His body ached as though he had been crushed under stone. He was lying on a couch, covered with a dazzlingly white cloth which reminded him of heavy silk. He lifted the cover and blushed because a loose suit of the same material hid his body.

He wondered if one of Tanner's men had put him to bed, and fervently hoped so. The room was small, but so spotless and perfectly arranged that he might have been in some Heavenly managed hospital. An arched doorway, leading from his room, opened on a pleasing apartment beyond.

"I think that you had better rest more before you speak."

Walker twisted around quickly to stare at the plump, red-faced little man who sat on the floor at the head of the cot.

Walker was taken completely by surprise. The little fellow stood up, his index finger pressed tightly to a smiling mouth. He was dressed, as was Walker, in glorified white pajamas. He was almost as wide as he was tall.

"Shhhh. I told you conversation is unnecessary. You are an earthman, and that assures you the best possible treatment. You saved my son from death and that is a favor I will never forget."

"You," Walker whispered, "you're Tanner's father?"

The cherub grinned.

"I'm hardly Tanner's type, am I," he asked. Then he sighed. "You see,

Tanner's mother was a truly magnificent creature."

"I—I didn't expect this," Walker said. "In fact, I didn't expect anything, I guess. To get out of that damned chamber of horrors was all that I had time to think of."

The little man seemed to have recovered from his dream review of memories. A bright smile wreathed his face.

"Then let me welcome you to Theba, the underdog city, and tell you that as King of a doomed people, I offer you what little hospitality remains, until you are strong enough to offer us your counsel."

Walker's face clouded.

What possible advice could he, Walker, offer them?

His shoulder hurt him badly. In trying to sit up, he wrenched it. With a cry of pain, he sank back to the bed again. Immediately King Arnno was at his side. The king's eyes grew round and his face turned pale with anxiety.

"Are you all right?"

Walker closed his eyes tightly, trying to make sense of the situation.

"I'm all right," he said weakly. "I—I guess I need a few hours' sleep."

King Arnno did not answer. When Walker opened one eye to see what had happened to the little man, King Arnno was sitting on the floor once more, his patient eyes watching the earth-man for any sign of discomfort.

ROBERT WALKER came to the cavern city of Theba in a battered, hand made boat. He had drifted on the underground river, under the fire-desert, and into the vast cavern which housed King Arnno's kingdom. His clothing was the same dirty, torn suit he had worn since Nick Freeman dragged him from Chicago into this strange world.

Now he had fully recovered from his strange experience, feeling fit once more. The more he saw of Theba, the more he longed to help these people who lived in dread beneath the surface of the fire-desert.

Today was the first time he had left the room in which he first awakened. King Arnno had come personally to watch the seven tailors fit Walker out in fine, blue silk clothing. He wore a robe that swept to his ankles, and under it, a suit consisting of tight jacket and loosely fitting trousers. Around his waist they had strapped a wide belt filled with long, blunt nosed bullets. Into the belt, he had himself placed the fire-gun with its splendid gold handle and glittering barrel.

To Walker's complete surprise, King Arnno met him outside his own chambers, dressed in identical clothing. On each of their heads, an attendant fitted a blue hat trimmed with a single red feather. In this way, Bob Walker became an equal of King Arnno, and was acknowledged as such, because Arnno had dressed him in royal fittings and prepared to accompany him on their first inspection tour.

It had taken Walker several days to recover and he had only seen a few of Arnno's people.

He tried to conceal his surprise as they left the castle, moving slowly down the broad stairs to the Avenue of Splendor.

Looking back, he realized he had seen only a few rooms of the vast, dreamlike palace in which the royal family lodged. There were other things to take his eyes away from the castle.

Before him the Avenue of Splendor stretched away as far as the eyes could see. A broad, smoothly paved boulevard led to the far reaches of the cavern and above it the rugged jutting walls of the cave roof hung down like ever

threatening storm clouds.

There were thousands of Thebans crowded along the edge of the Avenue. Behind them, the tall windowless buildings rose story on story to the very roof of the cave. Walker judged quickly, as they went together down the steps, that Theba must be about ten miles square. Within that space, if he could guess by the men and women he saw, there must be thousands of Thebans.

A cheer rose below deafening him. King Arnoo's words were lost in the uproar. As they reached the Avenue, a small, open vehicle rolled up and stopped before them. It looked like a large canoe, wheels hidden partially under gleaming red metal, with a wide red leather seat stretching from side to side, near its prow. An attendant, obviously pleased with his duty, opened the door and waited while they climbed in. The door closed. The car moved silently away from the palace. Behind them three other cars fell into line. Turning around, Walker noticed that Tanner and his sister occupied the car behind them. The others were filled with well dressed men, probably ministers of the cabinet.

Tanner flashed him a grateful smile and Lonna nodded pleasantly. She was clad in royal blue. Her fine head carried the brilliant crown of the House of Arnoo. Walker smiled back and was about to wave his hand in greeting. However, at a curt signal from Arnoo, he turned and stared ahead.

"You must be careful not to express personal emotions before my people," King Arnoo said in a low voice. "To them, you are a person from *earth*, and therefore dwell in a place above and apart from Thebans."

Something in the King's voice told Walker that he should remain silent. He decided to be careful until he knew

more of the Thebans and their King.

MUCH of Walker's old spirit returned that day. He had been strangely frightened and depressed since he first faced Nick Freeman in Tebba. The fear was gone. He knew he had been afraid only because he did not understand. Now, with men about him who seemed friendly, he felt almost at home.

The car moved along the Avenue of Splendor and he had to rise several times, at Arnoo's suggestion, and nod toward the people who were struggling to get a glimpse of him. He felt like a monkey in a gold cage. The feeling wasn't unpleasant, and he made the best of it.

The car left the Avenue of Splendor and spent two hours touring the city. Walker guessed that Theba and Tebba were much alike in layout. He guessed that Freeman and his genius for designing new weapons and products, had pushed Tebba ahead until King Arnoo himself admitted bitterly that Theba was the "underdog city" of the pair.

Now that they had seen Theba, the royal car turned to speed away from the remainder of the parade.

King Arnoo lost his royal dignity. He turned to Walker and addressed him humbly.

"Your creative chambers have been prepared," he said. "If you have had time enough to rest, we will go there now, and waste no further time. I am anxious to see progress in our war against Free-Man."

Walker winced. Just what did King Arnoo expect? Walker had a vague idea. Lonna had hinted that, as an earthman, Walker would be able to assist them. It seemed they thought he was another Freeman. Freeman was an inventor. Even on earth, Nick Freeman had been famous. Walker

was nothing but a common workman, without any imagination to speak of, who had spent hours over various tools in a grimy machine-shop.

"I guess I'm ready to try my luck." He tugged at his collar. "It—will be quite an experience."

King Arnoo nodded enthusiastically.

"An *experience* that will give Free-Man cause to worry," he agreed. "My people will do the work. You must offer the initial idea and explain to them what is needed. While weapons are our prime need, we will welcome any other plans that you may have for the city and its people. Free-Man has given the people of Tebba many objects that have increased their pleasure of living."

He added the last as an after thought. His eyes blinked and he spoke wistfully.

The car halted before a long, low stone building. Several men in scarlet cloaks sprang from the open door to stand at attention as they left the car. King Arnoo led the way into the stone structure, followed by Walker, entering a dark, poorly ventilated hall.

Here, he thought, was as far as the likeness between the two cities went. Tebba was cool and well lighted. This building, unlike the palace, was dingy and smelled of perspiration. Yet, the building seemed to have been newly constructed.

Walker followed King Arnoo down the hall into increasing darkness, through a door into a huge loft. Even in the poor light, enough of the place was visible to open his eyes with astonishment.

Before him, spread out haphazardly with seemingly no relationship to each other, was the largest collection of machine-tools he had ever seen. Here in the dusty, strangely dark room were drill presses, great molds, saws and mechanical hammers. Here was every type of machine he had ever seen or

dreamed of. One thing puzzled him. The machines, though new in appearance, like the exterior of the building, were unused.

He had entered an entire factory, and what looked like a good one, which manufactured nothing.

Walker turned to King Arnoo. Before he could speak, King Arnoo started to explain.

"I know this is puzzling to the mind of an earth-man," he said with a note of apology in his voice. "You see, my spies have gathered data from Free-Man's factories. They have patiently copied each of his machines, but they have been unable to find the plans for the manufacture of equipment. Free-man hides these plans in his vaults. There lies his power.

"Our people are as clever as the Tebbans. They can copy as well. Yet, without Free-Man's knowledge of how to proceed, these machines are powerless to us."

"*And I'm to fill the gap,*" Walker muttered darkly under his breath. "Little Robert Walker, who flunked every class in High School and worked in a machine shop. The little genius from earth, some to help the Thebans become a master-race."

For no good reason his thoughts turned back to Lonna. Lonna, cool and beautiful, riding in the royal car. And to Tanner, who had risked his life and the lives of his men, to bring him here to safety.

He had to try to help these people. Was it fair to assume that if the Thebans could construct these machines, they might also be able to follow his suggestions? But, what *were* his suggestions? He had never fooled around with strange machinery. It didn't take brains to run machinery at the shop. He'd done that by pressing a row of buttons and turning off the power when

the five o'clock whistle blew.

"You do not seem satisfied," King Arnoo said suddenly. "We will try to please you. I will call the man who is responsible for the plans and the machinery."

Walker thought suddenly that this had gone far enough. He couldn't give these fine people the run-around. He turned quickly, groping for the right words.

"You're—mistaken about me," he said desperately. "I couldn't build a bird-cage with this hodge-podge of machinery."

The king chuckled, summoning one of the guards.

"Wait," he said. "Speak to the man I'm calling and he will make any corrections you suggest."

"*But you don't understand,*" Walker cried. "*I'm . . .*"

The King had already turned away and was speaking in a low voice to the guard.

The guard left the room hurriedly. In a moment he was back and behind him strode the huge warrior Waunu. Waunu flashed Walker a smile of greeting.

"The earth-man wishes to re-arrange your machines," the King said. "When he is finished he will, at his leisure, outline the first project. Listen to him closely as his mind is far advanced. Do as he says and see that you make no errors. When he wishes, see that he is escorted swiftly to the palace where he can rest."

"Yes, your Majesty," Waunu bowed stiffly. The King turned to Walker and spoke respectfully:

"You will have all the men you need. Six thousand warriors are pledged to give the necessary assistance. I am King of the fighting forces and you are now King over my people, to produce the things which will give us all a happier life."

WITHOUT wasting further words, he bowed and retreated toward the door. His guards went with him, leaving Waunu staring at Walker like a faithful, slightly awed child.

"*Here, brother, goes nothing,*" Walker muttered to himself. "When they find out what a fourflusher they've got on their hands, I'm gonna cook in my own broth."

He stared at Waunu and Waunu stared back patiently, hopefully.

Walker wondered just what the King had expected. He hoped it wouldn't take much to impress him at first. Perhaps, if he could put some simple objects together, the Thehans would be satisfied until he had time to study a more complicated job. They wanted to make war on Freeman. That would call for cannons and other tools of war. He'd never fired anything more powerful than Tanner's fire-gun.

He couldn't let them down. There was Lonna, the most important of them all. He'd never forgive himself if he had to confess defeat and have her find it out.

There was one idea that he might be able to offer.

"Waunu," he asked abruptly, "you have power to run this shop?"

Waunu nodded. His eyes started to twinkle. His mind had carried the plans for the shop from Tehha. His instructions had caused the machines to be built. He was anxious to see them at work.

"Yes," he said eagerly. "The Tehhans have to pipe water from the reserve tank which creates power under their city. You remember we escaped through the water pipe?"

Walker nodded, and Waunu continued. "We are more fortunate in Theba. The underground river runs below Theba. I have seen that the Tehhan power device has been copied accurately. It is lo-

cated below this building. At a turn of the power wheel, this equipment will work smoothly.

Walker was intoxicated now with his own dreams. It was a wild plan. A plan that, unless he could remember all the details, might trip him up.

"Are all the buildings in Theba as poorly ventilated as this?"

Waunu looked puzzled.

"I mean," Walker added quickly, "is the air as poor. Does it smell?"

Waunu could understand that.

"Badly," he said. "We have not mastered the Tebban art of replacing foul air with fresh. It is indeed unfortunate. The palace has a pipe connection with the clean air near the underground river. It was impossible to run a separate pipe to each building."

"But it wouldn't be impossible to run a large pipe to the center of the city," Walker asked eagerly, "and from that pipe, send out a series of smaller and ever smaller pipes until the last building in Theba was contacted?"

Waunu looked disappointed.

"The air would not travel so far," he said in a sad voice. "*We have thought of that.*"

It was plain to Walker that thus far his intelligence hadn't impressed Waunu.

"That's not the whole plan," he went on hurriedly. "You have a powerful mechanism near the river, creating power to run these machines. Is it powerful enough to turn a fan?"

Waunu seemed slightly more impressed, but the word *fan* made him stare blankly again. This time Walker saw his error.

"Come with me," he said, and walked to a long bench that crossed part of the room. He found a slim metal shaving on the floor and used it as a pencil to trace the diagram in the wooden bench. "I am going to show you how to con-

struct a *fan*, and tell you what it will do.

With Waunu staring over his shoulder, he amazed even himself by sketching a fairly presentable four armed fan and the gears which would connect it to a motor. As he worked, Waunu drew closer to the design. When he finished, Waunu sighed deeply.

Walker stepped away from the bench and Waunu continued to stare for some time. When he looked at Walker again, all the old faith in the earth man had returned and was visible in his expression.

"It will be done at once," he said. "I will call a thousand warriors at once. If you wish, I will call two thousand!"

WALKER gulped hard hoping that Waunu was smarter than he looked.

"A thousand men will be enough," he said. Then thinking it better to add a little bocus-pocus to impress Waunu, he added: "The large pipe must be several times the size of a man. It must have a wide mouth to catch all the wind created by the fan. You already know about the fan. The small pipes must reach into the bottom of each building, where an outlet will be left at the roof to let the old air escape."

Waunu was nodding vigorously.

Walker felt as though he'd been dragged through every inch of the pipe Waunu and his men were to build.

"If this dream works out," he said, forgetting that Waunu was still concentrating on every word, "I'll get them to build a distillery and I'll get soused on Theban whiskey."

"You will have to explain the meaning of distillery," Waunu said solemnly. "My brain has thus far caught all the details of your splendid plan. I confess that I'm confused by your last words."

Walker grinned.

"I was talking to myself," he confessed. "But if I do explain the word to you later, you'll be pleasantly surprised with the results."

Waunu smiled and bowed respectfully.

"I will try to learn quickly," he promised. "Give me a short time to arrange our first project and I will start at once on the de-still-ory."

"I'll bet you would," Walker answered, picturing a row of Thebans lined up for their first drink of fire-water. "Man, wouldn't you be a fighter if you were half soused?"

Waunu looked blank again at this statement. He decided that the earth-man was engaged in a personal discussion affecting only himself.

"If I can leave you now," he said, "I will start work at once on the *jan*."

"By all means," Walker urged; and as Waunu passed beyond hearing distance, "I'll start figuring out how I'm going to get out of Theba when the King finds out how I'm using his precious men and money."

But, King Arnob was not displeased. He had expected the mind of the earth man to conceive just such a plan. In fact, King Arnob was glad in his heart that the earth man didn't insist on making war machinery. King Arnob wasn't angry at anyone. As long as the Thebans stayed at home, he would be glad to do the same. It was the hot, excitable blood of Arnob's warriors that demanded war.

So, with the proclamation issued that work was to start at once on a mysterious object called *jan*, two thousand Thebans were put to work on the project. King Arnob decreed that a vast party would be held at the palace and all Thebans of high rank were invited to meet and converse with the earth-man.

Bob Walker looked forward to the

coming banquet with mixed emotions. The *jan* project was under way. Waunu had presented him with a working model which amazed Walker and put some of his fears at rest. Now, with the King's tailor, Walker was choosing his wardrobe. His clothing was to be identical to Arnob's.

Although he couldn't understand why he was held in such high esteem he had no choice but to accept the people's praise and make himself a little talking god for their benefit.

It was early in the evening when the tailor packed his materials and left the suite. Walker examined himself carefully in the mirrored dressing room. Although a bit different than the clothing he had worn at home, the royal purple suit, tightly wound red turban and comfortable red shoes didn't make a bad combination, providing you liked rainbows. He hoped that Lonna who had avoided him carefully since his arrival, would acknowledge his presence tonight.

Soon after eight, the King presented himself and accompanied Walker down the winding stairs to the banquet hall. King Arnob's palace might lack some of the gadgets that Freeman had supplied for Tebba. However, the huge, high ceilinged room into which the Thebans were drifting, was beyond Walker's fondest dreams of luxury. Devoid of the strange green light of Tebba, Arnob's palace depended on thousands of lighted candles to illuminate the halls. The floor, constructed from red and blue stone squares, made Walker feel as though he were walking across a giant checker-board.

In a pleasant daze, he stood at the King's side and greeted hundreds of guests who entered the room. He knew that every eye was upon him. They considered him in a world by himself.

Every Theban accepting Walker's

hand was obviously flattered with the honor. Yet, they carefully avoided any conversation with him, once names had been exchanged.

PRINCESS LONNA came late, looking like something from an intoxicating dream. She swept into the room, her slim vibrant body clothed in shimmering scarlet. Her hair, combed and coiled carefully, sparkled under the candle light. Her eyes flashed when she saw Walker standing at her father's side. For an instant, the grip on her escort's arm loosened.

If Walker was impressed by Lonna, his heart suffered an unexpected blow when he saw the slim, handsome warrior at her side.

King Arnoo presented them.

"Lonna, you have met the earth-man!"

Walker nodded and took her hand. It was small and so soft that he was almost afraid he might bruise it.

The girl nodded.

"All my meetings with the earth-man have made me happy."

She spoke with a note of sincerity; yet Walker felt that she was staring at him with the impersonal admiration of one who studies a fine piece of machinery. He had to confess that he was jealous of the man who waited respectfully for his turn to be presented.

King Arnoo turned to Lonna's escort.

"A man whom you must meet and consider your friend," he said happily. "My Minister of War, Captain Rons Warre. Also, the nobleman who has consented to give my daughter, Lonna, a place in his home."

Captain Rons Warre stepped forward one pace, saluted stiffly and took Walker's hand. He was a man, from his straight, proudly erect shoulders to the small booted feet.

"I am honored with the introduc-

tion," Rons Warre said in a warm voice. "King Arnoo flatters me. It is Lonna who accepted me, and I who am proud and grateful to become her mate."

The four of them stood in a little group and Lonna stared at Walker as though badly puzzled about something she could not mention. King Arnoo was glowing with pride because his finest warrior had met and become a friend of the earth-man.

"This night makes me very happy," the little King said. "Captain Warre will make use of the war instruments that are to come. We ask nothing, and expect the earth man to bide his time in producing such materials. We only hope that our dull minds can grasp his thoughts."

Warre nodded quickly, adding a wordless "amen" to the speech.

"And now if you will excuse us," his eyes flashed toward Lonna. "The Princess and I wish to dance."

Walker felt a lump in his throat that with any amount of swallowing wouldn't disappear. Lonna, about to throw herself whole heartedly into the evening's entertainment, was already spoken for and seemingly happy with handsome Captain Rons Warre.

Walker muttered something appropriate, accepted the Captain's hand once more and watched them wander, arm in arm, away into the crowd.

SOMEWHERE above the huge room, soft, plaintive stringed instruments were adding a magic touch to the scene. Couples whirled out on the checkerboard floor, dancing a step that was strange to Walker.

"Tanner, I am happy, now that you have come."

Walker pivoted to see father and son embracing each other. Waunu, well dressed but strangely out of place, stood uncomfortably behind the dark skinned,

devil-may-care Tanner. Tanner turned away from the King and walked swiftly toward Walker. He took Walker's hand with great gusto. "Our paths have not crossed for several days. I have waited for the opportunity to thank you for saving my life."

Walker felt his face turn a deep shade of red.

"And who came into a tower filled with Freeman's guards to rescue me from under their noses?"

Tanner reminded him of a spirited colt. The boy was dressed in wide bottomed scarlet trousers, silk shirt and sash. Among the carefully attired ministers of the state, he looked more like pirate than prince.

"But it was an honor to rescue the earth man. He will lead the Thebans to their rightful place in power over the Tebbans. I, Tanner, am only a servant of my father."

He motioned Waunu forward and the red-head stumbled uncomfortably to his side. Waunu took Walker's hand, squeezed it in his huge paw, stepping back to stare at Walker with admiration.

"I am honored to be accepted at the palace." He seemed about ready to choke. Waunu, it was evident, had not been here often. He had dressed carefully in his finest battle clothing. Tight brown jacket, olive green trousers that bulged at the ankle as did Tanner's and a small, scarlet cap with green feather.

King Arnnoo buckled happily.

"Waunu says he is honored." The King chuckled. "Waunu is our most brilliant and trusted man of industry. Waunu stole the plans and built working machinery. Some day he will be master of every working man in Tbeba."

Waunu's face flushed to match his carrot-top perfectly. It was obvious that he was stunned, yet very pleased with the compliment.

"Thank you," he said stiffly. "I will always remember my debt to my King."

"And what of the party?" Tanner interrupted. "What of our earth-man who should be made happy tonight? Isn't this affair in his honor?"

Walker felt very small and insignificant once more.

CHAPTER X

War Comes to Theba

THROUGHOUT the evening, he seemed in a world apart from the Thebans. He tried to convince himself that toasts drunk to him were enough to make him happy.

Lonna, the one bright star in the entire room, avoided any further contact with him.

When Walker had watched the last guest leave, he went to his own rooms with a sinking sensation in his stomach.

Tanner had been fine. Waunu, King Arnnoo, even Captain Rons Warre, were all stalwart men and he was proud of his association with them. But somehow, after the first night with Lonna in the invisible cell at Tebba, he could not understand her feelings toward him. After three hours of fighting for sleep, he succeeded only in seeing Lonna's oval, smiling face before him. Bob Walker decided that he was hopelessly in love with King Arnnoo's daughter. In love with a girl who was pledged to another man.

Why the hell couldn't Warre be a villain like so many love rivals he had read about? Why did Warre have to be a clean limbed, likeable fighter? Walker wondered for a long time about the fate that had tossed him here. He gave up finally to dream about a fan that wouldn't work, an angry mob of Thebans who showed him up for a witless fool and sent him out of the city

with a coat of tar and feathers.

FIVE days passed quietly after the night of the banquet. The American was moody the day following his disappointing meeting with Lonna. Then, with the knowledge that soon Theba would demand further proof of his ability, he asked for drawing material and spent hours in his room turning out sketches of every imaginable machine he could remember.

From Waunu, who was busy with the fan project, Walker found that the river obligingly ran directly under the palace. He suggested a simple pump. After drawing the diagram of a large bathtub, he put a dozen of Waunu's men to work piping water into the palace itself.

On the sixth day, two great events shook Theba to the very bottom of its foundation. The people of Theba felt the first faint drafts of fresh air pouring up through their dwellings from the underground river. With Walker superintending the job personally, King Arnoo took his first water-bath.

To say that the Thebans were only pleased to find their buildings ventilated, would be doing Walker an injustice. To describe Arnoo's approach to his bath, could not be fittingly done with mere words.

King Arnoo, already jubilant because the fan was whirling steadily below the city, walked down the broad hall, clad only in his robe. Walker placed the bath in his own chambers purposely, wanting to keep the whole thing secret from the King for the moment. The room had been a wardrobe closet. Now one corner of it was occupied by a gleaming, six foot tub complete with water tap.

King Arnoo was doubtful.

"It is indeed a wonderful looking monster," he admitted, staring into the tub. "You are sure these water-baths

have no ill effect upon the body?"

It might be added, in due respect to the King, that the Thebans had always relied upon a perfumed substance to freshen their bodies.

Walker shook his head gravely.

"Water is used by all earth men," he said.

This pleased King Arnoo. He was much impressed by anything the earth-man endorsed. At Walker's instructions, he discarded the robe and inserted his ample figure in the tub. Walker himself turned the tap that admitted the water.

A rather frightened King retreated from the cold river water. Then, muttering with joy, he became accustomed to the chilly bath and started to splash about delightedly.

"It's—it's wonderful. A definite improvement. I—I feel as though new life were flowing into my body."

Walker noticed that the king's lips were blue with the cold. Goose pimples stood out on Arnoo's white skin. If the King could stand it for a few minutes?

It was an hour later; and because he didn't want to kill the King in one sitting, the earth-man had to use all his argumentative power to remove Arnoo from the new bathtub.

A half day later, hundreds of Theban noblemen passed solemnly through the tiny chamber, each pausing long enough to listen to King Arnoo's description of water's powerful medical quality.

"And I feel ten years younger," the little King insisted solemnly to anyone who would listen. "First the members of my own family will be admitted. Then, as we have not yet made arrangements to supply these tubs for the entire city, you will be admitted with preference to your rank. All of you must try the wonderful tub."

Walker was firmly established in Theba. The King's bathtub and the

fan that turned steadily below the city, assured him of cooperation in any hair-brained scheme he undertook.

THE city of Tebba was in a state of upheaval. Free-Man had betrayed his subjects.

It all started with the clever escape of the Tbeban slaves. Jim Brawn had guessed that such an attempt would be made. His meeting with Lonna, when the girl slave had brought him fruit, set his mind racing back to Walker and the prisoner's probable state of mind.

Brawn had not been a fool. To get rid of Walker would be another step toward his own peace of mind. He had watched the slave girl carefully, found out from another slave that she had been to Walker's cell and made his own plans accordingly.

He pleaded with Freeman to place a special guard near Walker, but Nick Freeman only laughed.

With guards whom he managed to order about without Freeman's knowledge, Brawn made an attempt to capture Walker the night he escaped to Theba.

That gave Brawn his first opportunity to speak secretly against Freeman. Now, hidden in the identical hut Tanner had used as a meeting place, Brawn addressed a small circle of trusted guards from Freeman's building.

Brawn was accustomed to swaying men. The men of Tebba were growing contented and fat under Freeman's guiding genius. Brawn regarded them all with contempt.

"You have come here for the fifth time in as many nights. Now, what is the report?"

A dark bearded old warrior arose, drawing his slave-robe tightly about him. He was proud to hold a position of importance once more. The Tbebans were getting soft. War was good

for a man. It made him remember the days when he was young and afraid of nothing.

"I have gone among the people at the east end of Tebba," he said. "I have five hundred men who will understand that you tried to prevent the escape of the slaves, and that Free Man did nothing.

"You have told us that Free Man is weak and that he does not hate the Thebans. We believe you, being also an earth-man, are better able to lead us than Free Man. Our men are ready to throw the weaker one from the throne and place you in his place."

"One thing we do not know: and we want an answer tonight."

Brawn grinned, his eyes flashing in the murky darkness.

"Good! Freeman would unite the two cities of Tebba and Theba. He fears war and thinks that you could live together in peace. It is an admission of weakness."

Every man in the group leaned forward intently. They were the lowest class in the city. Slaves who longed for power.

"With Freeman out of the way, you will see a new era. I will conquer Theba and the Thebans will do the work. They will be the slaves and you will become noblemen."

He smiled, knowing how much he must sound like the word politicians back in Chicago. His political experience served him well.

"Will each man be responsible for five hundred more?"

A low murmur of agreement.

"There are thirty of us in this group. We have a bidden army of fifteen thousand men, ready to turn against Freeman. You will strike at the tenth-bell tomorrow night. I will handle Freeman personally."

That last sentence increased their re-

spect for him two-fold. To *handle* Free-Man was the thing they all dreaded.

"You understand the details?"

The oldest slave arose again, plainly feeling the importance of his position.

"You promise us a Theban victory and a place in the palace as noblemen?"

Brawn stared at the assorted group of ruffians and a quizzical smile lighted his face.

"I promise every man here his just reward," he said slowly. "Is that enough?"

"That is enough. It is time for us to return to our places in the city and prepare for the attack."

They arose and went silently up the trail. Brawn remained behind, staring at the huge water pipe through which Walker had made his escape. At last he shook his head as though satisfied with everything, then followed his men toward the seventh level.

IT WAS after the ringing of the tenth-bell when Freeman arose from his desk and walked thoughtfully down the hall to his private suite. Freeman was bewildered. Something told him that all was not well in the city. Freeman was hurt, and a little frightened by his people. He had come here a long time ago; had been a peaceful, industrious man. His mind had created a Utopia which showed signs of crumbling.

But why?

He didn't know. During the past several days, his trusted assistant, the man he knew as Robert Walker, had reported mobs milling about in the city. Sudden fights broke out. Tempers were rubbed raw by some malady of the mind.

It never occurred to Freeman to distrust Walker. Freeman had been troubled by Brawn's escape, but he knew that Brawn was ignorant of the fire-

desert. He thought that Brawn and the Theban slaves had suffered their just reward on the desert, burned by the searing flames that played across its red-sands.

What Freeman had never known, was that a great underground river ran under the desert. That the river formed a lake beneath Theba, where Thebans could dock their boats and climb to safety.*

Freeman retired to his room to prepare for rest. A knock on the door interrupted him and he donned a robe hurriedly. His assistant, the man Walker, came in at his bidding.

"Can you spare a few minutes?" Trouble of some kind has broken out in the tower. A slave has escaped from the cell of invisibility."

Freeman frowned.

"Another?"

Brawn, alias Walker, smiled.

"I can't help it," he said. "It's your idea. You should have made it escape-proof."

* An explanation of Freeman's adopted home should be given the reader. To correctly understand the events to occur, picture Freeman's world as a vast desert which lies cool at night, becoming a searing, fiery world of death during the day. Theba was protected from these flames by the great curtain of green light that was forced from Tebban power plants, across the sky. When Freeman came, the Tebbans lived below the surface, their bodies and brains cooked by the heat from above.

Freeman pictured a city above ground, without fear of the heat, and a people growing gradually stronger because of the coolness. He constructed power houses and stored water in reserve tanks to turn the power units. Then he spread the protection screen of the emerald ray across the sky to fight off the heat. The ray was his own invention. If it were destroyed, the Tebbans would once more be forced to go back to their cave living, becoming once more a degenerate, doomed race.

Theba, on the other hand, was built in a vast cavern. The desert heat could not penetrate its roof. The river cooled it enough to make life comfortable.

Therefore, the fire-desert was the real enemy of Theba, and not the Thebans as they imagined.

Freeman was puzzled.

"But I have ordered no one placed in the cell," he protested.

"A slave," Brawn said calmly, "was placed there yesterday. One of the trouble makers. I took the liberty..."

Freeman was satisfied.

"Perfectly right of you to do so," his tone was apologetic.

"I appreciate your help in the problem that has risen."

"Then—you'll come?"

Freeman nodded.

"I'll come," he said, starting to put on more suitable clothing.

THEY entered an elevator and sped swiftly to the level of the invisible cell. Brawn was careful to remain behind Freeman when they reached the cell door. It was slightly opened. Two guards stood just outside. Brawn followed Freeman directly to the cell, and Freeman addressed one of the guards.

"You were on duty here, yet you let a slave escape?"

Both men looked dumb. Brawn interrupted hurriedly.

"The door," he said, "it was forced from the inside. You should improve the lock."

Freeman pushed the door open and stepped inside. He bent close to the lock and started to feel for a defect. Before he could protest, the door slammed in his face and the click of the bolt sounded from the outside.

"Now you're going to get a dose of your own torture machine."

It was Brawn's voice, muffled by the heavy door.

Freeman shrank back, suddenly frightened, realizing for the first time who he was dealing with.

"You're not Bob Walker," his voice was incredulous.

Brawn chuckled. It was a soulless, satisfied sound.

"Why, Nick, you're getting smart, aren't you?"

Nick Freeman threw his weight against the door. Already a strange dizziness had swept over him. There seemed to be nothing below or above him. *He couldn't stand high places.*

"Jim?" No answer. "Jim Brawn! For Heaven's sake, let me out! I should have known. You convinced me of your innocence so easily!"

Brawn was still there, laughing a little wildly.

"I always did have that power over you, Nick. Remember how easily my voice could sway your judgment?"

Freeman stopped fighting. He was panting, trying to catch his breath.

"Brawn, don't leave me here. I'll go crazy. I can't stand this place. It will kill me."

Brawn's voice came once more.

"That's about what I planned."

Then silence. Dead, unbroken silence. Nick Freeman turned and sprawled forward, groping for the mock safety of the silver square. Once in the center of it, he lay very still, his breath coming hard. He closed his eyes tightly and tried to think. Tried to throw off the utter horror that was creeping over him.

Jim Brawn. Brawn, whom he had trusted as Bob Walker, was in control of Tebba.

A VAST change was taking place in the cities of Tebba and Theba. The Tebbans, not usually a warlike people, were torn away from their devotion to Freeman by the constant nagging of Brawn's hoodlums. Brawn himself, silver-tongued rogue, made his people believe that Nick Freeman had planned to betray them to the Thebans. Gradually, Tebba turned from a city of peace into a vast armament plant. Brawn was never satisfied. He drove

them night and day, issuing statements which his imagination produced, concerning the coming war with the Thebans.

"The Thebans are ready to attack us. They have vast factories working night and day and will march against Tebba in a short time. The earth-man, who escaped from Tebba, will lead them against us."

Although he spoke in this manner, Brawn had no idea that Walker was still alive and actually doing some of the things he gave him credit for.

Theba was preparing for war.

* * *

The King's bathtub had been a grand gesture. Now, with Arnoo satisfied, Walker gave Waunu complete instructions for war machinery. Here his imagination came in handy. Knowing little of guns and tanks, he turned to his own training for assistance. Blueprints were made of hand drills. By multiplying their size a dozen times, the Tebbans produced boring implements that would break through solid cement walls. The theory of the acetylene torch was known to Walker. Again, by changing the original torch to a machine a hundred times its original size, he created a fire-throwing cannon which would send deadly flame ahead fifty yards, burning anything within its range.

During these preparations, King Arnoo explained to him the theory of the Tebban "sky-curtain" that kept the fiery sun from reaching the upper levels of Theba.

"We prepared atomic bombs after a formula stolen from Free Man, but they failed to destroy the curtain. Later, while you were in the city, we attacked with huge red-rays, another of Free Man's secrets and nearly succeeded in destroying the curtain."

Walker remembered that attack well.

"I'm glad that you didn't," he said musingly. "I might not be here now."

And so, with the King constantly at his side, Walker built Theba into a powerful military power and tried to plan an intelligent battle.

THE Tebbans struck first.

It was late at night when Tanner, Prince of Theba, rushed into Walker's chambers and awakened him. It took several moments before Walker was fully awakened. Tanner, his uniform covered with mud, face a mask of dirt, was almost too excited to explain.

"Quickly! We must mass our troops! A spy has come by the river from Tebba. The Tebbans plan crossing the fire-desert to attack us before morning."

Without asking questions, Walker dressed hurriedly.

Tebba attacking?

Walker was sure that Nick Freeman wasn't a warlike man. It had seemed to be Freeman's purpose to prevent war when possible. He had not spoken of retaliation, even when the Thebans attacked Tebba.

Could Brawn be at the bottom of this?

Walker donned his coat, a bitter smile twisting his lips. He owed Brawn a crack on the nose for certain difficulties he had caused. Perhaps this was his opportunity.

The people of Theba were in a state of high excitement. In battle, protecting their own city, they were untried.

Walker's mind worked furiously. As he stood at King Arnoo's side on the palace balcony, he was planning something that had occupied his mind for a long time.

The King gave a stirring speech. Behind them, seated around the circular balcony were Waunu, Tanner and the determined warrior, Captain Rons

Warre. Warre would lead the defense, at Tanner's side. Arnoo would remain to take charge of the city and Waunu would see that the war machines worked smoothly.

Walker spoke a few words of encouragement, then amid cheers from below, watched the huge parade of fire-throwers and flame-cannons pass along the Avenue of Splendor, toward the gate of the cavern.

Their task was plainly outlined. The army of Theba must keep the Tebbans from entering the underground city until day came. When the sun hit the desert once more, the Tebbans would be forced to retreat or burn to death on the fire-desert.

What weapons the Tebbans would use, Walker could not guess.

A more urgent scheme occupied his mind. If it worked, the Tebbans would return to their own city ready to listen to peace terms.

He asked Tanner and Waunu to remain behind, as Captain Rons Warre went swiftly from the palace to take the lead of his troops. With the two trusted men in his own room, Walker outlined his plan.

"When we escaped from Tebba, you told me the water pipe through which we came supplied power for the sky-curtain."

Waunu nodded, anxious to be on with the battle, wondering what new scheme was in Walker's mind.

"If that pipe line could be destroyed while the men of Tebba are away, it would create a panic. They would have to retreat to the lowest level to escape the sun's heat. Should our own lines fail, and the Tebbans enter our city tomorrow morning, we would lose everything. Let's assume that the sky-curtain over Tebba was destroyed tonight. The Tebban's would be in as bad a position as ourselves. They'd

return to a life as humble as our own would be, if we became Tebban slaves. Am I right?"

Waunu smiled admiringly while Tanner looked puzzled.

"But the pipe is a huge thing. It will be well guarded in time of war. Would it be possible . . . ?"

"Possible, and it will be done!" Waunu's eyes glittered excitedly. "The Tebbans have never guessed the source of their water supply. We will follow the river, as we came, and break the pipe open at the reserve tanks.

Tanner frowned.

"The reserve tanks are open. Without protection and with the surface watched by a detachment of guards. No man could cross without being killed."

But Walker wasn't finished.

"No *man*, that's true," he said. "But we'll float enough TNT across to blow the city itself off the map. There's bound to be a current drawing water into the pipe . . ."

"TNT?" Waunu leaned forward eagerly. "The strange substance we worked over yesterday?"

Walker nodded.

"I've been thinking about this for some time. We need a small boat-like float in which TNT can be packed and remain dry. We'll make three floats. One of them is sure to reach its goal. If the Tebban guards shoot at it while it crosses the tank, God pity them."

The plan appealed to Waunu because he had worked long with Walker and trusted him. To Tanner, anxious to be in the thick of the battle, Walker's plan did not sound feasible.

"We can stop the Tebbans here at the gates of Theba. I'm willing to rely on our troops and your equipment."

Walker arose quickly.

"As much as I appreciate your faith in me," he said, "I'd still like to tackle

the TNT idea."

They shook hands warmly, and Tanner left. Waunu remained behind.

"You're willing to make the underground trip with me?" Walker asked.

Waunu grinned.

"Tanner is a warrior," he said. "He has to see blood on the sand and hear the shouts of attacking hordes. For myself, I prefer the quiet trip underground."

Walker smiled at the old warrior.

"Then we'll take that quiet trip together," he said. "I think the most noise will come from the mouths of the Tehbans who remained at home."

PRINCESS LONNA ARNOO was badly worried. She had said goodbye to Rons Warre and watched him march away toward the city's gate.

It was not Warre she worried about though. True, she would take him as her mate in a short week, if he escaped alive from the battle. But now, after she had clung to Tanner and felt him push her away to take his own place with the troops, Lonna wandered about the palace, trying to find peace in its quiet walls.

Tanner shouldn't have told her of the earth-man's plan. Lonna's throat felt dry and very hot as she stood at the top of the stairs which led to the hall-room, watching Waunu follow Boh Walker from his own suite, across the magnificent court, away toward the factory.

There was something in Walker's step; something about the way he carried himself, that made him the greatest Prince of them all in her eyes. Lonna stood alone for several minutes, trying desperately to think only of Rons Warre. She knew it was hopeless. Her heart was with Boh Walker.

Boh Walker was an earth-man. Almost a god in Lonna's eyes.

Princesses didn't marry gods. They

looked up at them with worshipping eyes. Then, remembering their place in society, they go on living among their own kind, even though it breaks their heart.

With the rumble of war fading from the city, a vast curtain of silence fell over Theba. Women and children retreated to their homes waiting, trying to be brave.

They had waited for a leader. Now, under his guidance, there arose a doubt making them want back the peace they had had. A doubt which grew until, in their worried minds, they held Boh Walker responsible for the life of every Theban warrior.

Lonna wondered what would happen to Tanner and to her fat, lovable father. She did not hold Walker responsible. She wanted to be near him. Once she had saved his life, only to see him grow famous among her people, and become a great unfilled desire in her own heart.

When the last warrior's feet had sent wisps of dust floating up from Theba's roads, Lonna Arnnoo made a decision. Tanner had said that Walker and Waunu would go by the underground river. A long time ago, Lonna had hidden her own boat in the black shadows of the river below the palace.

She donned a dark robe, covered her glistening hair with a tight fitting hood and found her way swiftly to the door which led down to the river.

Perhaps she could help the earth-man safely to Theba.

* * *

The trek across the desert was not a long one. To Brawn, his pulses quickening at the thought of victory, the sound of Tehba's rilling cannons was comforting. He had never ridden across any country so completely blotted out by darkness.

From his car, a low slung, tear drop affair with lugs that gripped the soft

sand, he tried to see the hundreds of men and machines which were moving ahead of him.

The Tebbans needed no guide. They had been here often and only at night. The sand was still hot; a constant reminder that they must escape its hellish surface before daybreak.

The car halted finally. Brawn, knowing the time had come, drew his coat about him and left the car. For the occasion, he had chosen military boots, whipcords and a flashy crimson jacket. He was aware of his dashing appearance and the Tebbans knew it. They loved him, at least the rabble who had come, because he had made them fighting men. They were dressed in the best and had eaten the finest foods. They were no longer slaves, but fighting men.

BRAWN'S assistant was the old warrior who had spoken for the others in the cave below the seventh level. The man was dressed in a tight emerald uniform and his beard had been trimmed. He approached Brawn silently. His boots kicked up spurts of the warm sand. Twin fire-guns were strapped at his sides.

"We are a half mile from the gates of Theba," he said. "The Thebans have learned of our coming. However, our own spies have not been idle."

Brawn, angry because their plans hadn't been kept secret, was heartened by the Theban's apparently defensive attitude.

"Our spies tell us that the Thebans are prepared for war," the assistant said, "but, they cannot fire any projectiles. They depend on fire as their weapon, and it is effective only at fifty yards or less."

Brawn drew the coat tighter. The air was icy cold while the heat of the sand sent shivers up his legs. He grinned broadly.

"Now isn't that too bad?" he said. "Suppose we just sit right here and pound the hell out of them. They'll either have to charge or be destroyed by our long range weapons."

Under his breath he added: "*I'll have to look up Nick when I get back. If he isn't crazy by now, he'll be glad to know that his brain has pulled me through again.*"

The assistant nodded. His smile was toothless and triumphant.

"My idea exactly. We will draw up the cannon and start our assault at once."

"Assault hell, brother. This little party is going to be a blitz."

The older man's chin dropped slightly.

"B-l-l-t-z?"

Brawn rubbed his hands together to restore circulation.

"You'll learn."

Brawn was satisfied. He returned to the warmth of the car and sat there. Around him he could hear the shouting voices of his men. Cannons rolled by him. They were huge, rapid firing guns Nick Freeman had seen on earth and hidden in his vault in the form of carefully prepared blueprints.

Brawn had the keys to that vault now. In it were enough new and old prints to assure him control of the two cities for all time.

Chapter XI

Love—And a Charge of TNT

THE assault of Theba started with wild, discordant shouting from a thousand lips. The desert was suddenly bright as day with the flash of cannon fire. Beneath Brawn the earth trembled. His eyes grew wide with excitement. The shells were flying high, moving with what seemed incred-

ible slowness out over the sandy wastes. Then came the dull CRUMP-CRUMP as they landed in enemy territory.

War with Theba was a picnic for Jim Brawn that night. The army of Tehba kept up its murderous firing, waiting a little fearfully for the Thebans to attack.

Brawn knew his chief power lay in those cannons. At hand-to-hand fighting, his troops would not have the necessary courage. The fearful expectancy of a counter attack died after a time.

The cannon fire went on, blasting the night into day, shaking the fire desert until it was a swirling mist of sand.

Throughout that long night Captain Rons Warre's men never attacked.

To Bob Walker, the trip to Tebba was almost unbearable. Down here, buried hundreds of yards beneath the surface, everything was silent. Save for the steady drip-drip of water from the oars, the silver that flew away from the surface with every stroke, the river was a dead, sullen thing that moved with a sickening slowness.

Waunu, seated in the center of the craft, plied the oars swiftly. They moved steadily toward their goal. Walker crouched on the bottom of the boat, opening the boxes of powder. He placed murderous charges of TNT within the tiny, well constructed floats. These would drift across the reserve tank.

Neither of them spoke. Walker knew that Waunu's heart was in the center of the battle at Theba's gate. Walker worried also for the safety of those he had gradually learned to accept as his own people.

Neither of them noticed the faint, ever present sounds which followed them on their journey. Lonna Arnoo had crouched against the black, earthen wall under the palace and entered her own canoe only when she knew they

were well ahead of her. She handled the craft expertly; making sure that her presence would not be discovered.

The underground river opened into the reserve tanks of Tebba. The Tehbans themselves had never followed the river, probably because they feared the darkness. If Nick Freeman knew how easily Theba could be reached, he had not given this information to his people. Nick Freeman did not want war.

Waunu stopped rowing suddenly and leaned forward toward Walker.

"We should be close!"

Walker looked up from his place over the powder and stared ahead. Light showed faintly. He could see the broad, smooth surface of the reserve tanks far ahead.

"Move more slowly," he said. "I'd like to hide the boat against the bank, close to the entrance."

Waunu dipped the oars cautiously, sending them ahead once more. The light grew brighter. At last, feeling it would be suicide to go further, Walker motioned silently toward the bank.

The boat touched the mud and jarred slightly as it stopped moving. The bank here was flat. The water had been drawn low by the intake pipe until a man could stand outside the boat and by hending double he could still keep his feet fairly dry.

Walker crawled silently out of the boat and Waunu passed him the first float. It was a small object, about two feet long and shaped like a submarine. Weighted by the powder, it sank until only the top was above water.

The sound of voices came from beyond the entrance of the cave. Walker moved forward cautiously. Crouching just inside the cavern, he could see powerful searchlights flashing on the water. Guards were visible, walking along the top of the wall set up like targets on a range.



HE SUFFERED an almost uncontrollable urge to burn them down with his fire-rifle. Then, carefully, so there would be no sound, he lighted the fuse to the first float, closed the small waterproof door and sent it floating into the reserve tank.

He watched it until the current created by the intake pipe, caught the float and dragged it slowly into the center

of the pool.

It seemed to him that nothing had ever moved as slowly as that float. Without hesitation, he lighted the other two and pushed them in the same direction.

Then, hugging the wall tightly, he watched the first float as it moved more swiftly toward the intake, and shot from sight into the pipe.



Waunu, seated in the center of the craft, plied the oars swiftly

He breathed a sigh of relief.

No matter what happened now, he had accomplished what he had come for. He started back toward Waunu and the waiting boat. Then, at a sudden shout of alarm coming from the walls, he froze in his tracks.

"See it—there, on the surface! It looks like a log!"

One of the guards had spotted the second float. At once their voices rose with excitement.

"It is a bit of debris from the river," one voice said. Their words rang loud and hollow within the cave.

Walker was beginning to worry about the first float. The charge had been set for three minutes. It had taken two minutes for the float to cross the pool. He looked hurriedly at his watch. Two minutes and twenty seconds gone!

The argument among the guards rose to a high pitch. Some of them were frightened.

"There goes another!"

They had seen the third and last float. Two of them now were bobbing swiftly toward the pipe.

"They will wreck the mechanism of the power plant!"

Walker's heart seemed to stop beating. The damned fools.

He ran swiftly back toward the boat. As his feet hit its bottom, Waunu pulled away from the bank with all the strength he possessed. The boat shot into the river, hesitated, and turned toward Theba.

The sudden sputter of a fire-gun broke the silence. All the guards started shouting at once.

"The damned idiots!" Walker choked

B-A-R-O-O-O-M!

The fire-gun had found its mark.

The explosion rocked the earth around them. The water rolled back into the cavern with the force of a tidal wave. Walker held tightly to the edge of the rocking boat. He was aware of the high screams of pain that came from the walls as they tipped inward and crumbled into the water.

Then a second, dull explosion sounded as the TNT blew up somewhere inside the pipe. Walker knew one second of perfect satisfaction. The roof of the cavern started to crumble about them. Toward Theba, a huge slab of earth fell into the water with a sickening splash.

A terror stricken scream came from the direction of the cave in and Walker stared at Waunu who was still pushing them ahead with strength born of desperation. Waunu nodded grimly and rowed faster.

"Lonna!" he said. Walker knew that he was right.

JIM BRAWN, in his new role, knew that the battle was won. He would

be unable to enter the city of Theba before tomorrow night, because already the sky was growing light and red streaks of sunlight sent burning trails across the sand. The cannons were rumbling ahead of him, back toward Tebba.

The Theban army, with its short range weapons, had never fired a shot. The gouging, tearing strength of Brawn's cannons kept up a steady barrage throughout the night. Men who went ahead under cover of darkness, reported that the Thebans had returned to their cavern disheartened and ready to capitulate as soon as the Tebban army could return to invade the city itself.

Brawn was completely satisfied.

Satisfied, that is, until, in the early morning light, he viewed his adopted city of Tebba.

At first he noticed that columns of men had halted and were moving about in confusion. Then, with dust arising to mark its approach, a scout-car roared up to his own vehicle. The scout who reached him first was a youth. Incredible horror was written on the boy's dusty face. He leaped from the scout-car and opened the door to speak to Brawn.

"Tebba has been attacked from within!" His voice was weak with terror.

Brawn sprang forward, grasping the boy's arm cruelly.

"Attacked? That's absurd!"

The scout was almost incoherent.

"During the night, the main water pipe was blown up. The seventh level crashed down and covered the remains of the pipe to a depth of hundreds of feet. The power house lies idle, and now the sun is rising."

Brawn shuddered at the implication of those words. Without power to generate the sky-curtain, Tebba would be

smothering soon under a pitiless, burning sky.

He pulled the boy into his own car, slammed the door and shouted for the driver to proceed at full speed. As he rode he gathered what few details he could.

"Last night the guards at the reserve tank were frightened by strange objects floating into the water from underground. One of them discharged his fire-gun into the water and an explosion followed that destroyed the tank. The water has escaped, disappearing into the desert. A moment later, all Tebba was rocked by another explosion under the city. The power plant had to stop for lack of water. Unfortunately the intake was going at full speed. It was but a short time before the twelfth bell, and the water was flowing inward."

The boy hesitated to catch his breath. He wiped stinging dust from his eyes.

"The people of the city have rushed food to the lower levels of the city. There they await the coming of the heat. Before Free-Man came here, we could stand the heat by retreating below ground. Now that our bodies have changed from good living, it is doubtful if we can survive."

An oath escaped Brawn's lips. His fists clenched tightly.

"If I get the guard who did this he'll be sent to the highest point in the tower to sit there while the sun burns him to dust."

The boy shuddered.

"You are powerful but what of Free Man, your prisoner? He was not removed from the tower. He will die in a few hours."

Reminded of Nick Freeman's plight, Brawn felt better. Amid the catastrophe, he was at last feeling the satisfaction of knowing Freeman would die a death more terrible than any human

mind could devise.

Nick Freeman was locked in a room that seemed a part of the sky. Nick would see the sun rise over Tebba and have nothing to protect him from its frightening power.

"What are your plans?"

Brawn turned again to the scout, to see the boy's eyes burning with hope. The Tebbans were depending solely on him now for a plan to save their lives.

"The pipe must be repaired," Brawn shouted. "We are within the city now. Tell my leaders to report to me at once. Store as much water as possible below the city. You and your damned Tebbans will have to stand the heat until the pipe is fixed. Then we'll go back and blast the hell out of Tebba."

The scout drew away from him. He had never seen an earth-man angry. It took some of the God-like quality from Brawn and placed him in the same class as the frightened Tebbans.

"*And Free-Man is to remain in the tower?*"

Brawn leaned forward until his face was six inches from the scout's.

"*Freeman remains in the tower,*" he mimicked the scout's words, leering like a mad-man. "Now get the hell out of here and pass along the instructions."

The car halted. He shoved the scout from the door to watch with satisfaction as the boy fell face down, struggled to his feet and staggered away.

WHEN Bob Walker heard Lonna's voice rising in terror as the cavern roof fell, he felt like a helpless child who is locked in a closet. The cavern was pitch dark and if Lonna hadn't been buried under tons of earth, she might struggle in the water only to drown before they could find her—the thought was horrible.

Waunu had uttered her name once. His huge shoulder muscles bulged and knotted as the boat leaped forward. Waunu rowed with every bit of strength his body possessed, and between strokes, as the boat cut swiftly through the water, they both listened intently for another sound.

It was a matter of seconds, but Walker felt as though hours passed before he heard a gasp of fright and saw a disturbance on the surface of the water ahead.

"Lonna?" He called breathlessly.

Her voice drifted back faintly.

"Help me! In the water—close to the edge of the cavern—very deep. . ."

Then she sank again. Only the splash of the oars disturbed the silence. The boat struck a solid wall of mud. Walker was on his feet, tottering dangerously. Barely six feet from them a head broke the surface. Lonna's white face was visible against the black water.

Without hesitation, Walker dove cleanly into the river. In two strokes he was near her. He clutched her about the waist, feeling her arms groping feebly for him. They were on the surface, their faces close together, her arms tight about his neck.

With Waunu's help, he pushed her into the boat. She crouched tightly against him, her breath coming in pitiful, choking gasps.

"Why did you come?" He wanted to kiss Lonna, or pound the daylights out of her. He wasn't sure which.

"I—knew you and Waunu planned to blow up the pipe," she said weakly. "I thought you might need help."

She started to sob, and Walker, realizing that it was indirectly his own fault that she was here, pressed her head close to his chest.

Waunu had been watching them from the stern. A faint smile touched

his lips.

Lonna, overjoyed that the earth-man showed such concern for her safety, stared up at him with wide, misty eyes. Her lips were slightly parted and her heart beats were fast and uneven.

Walker took her in his arms and kissed her abruptly. To his surprise, she responded passionately. Her arms went about his neck and her lips pressed tighter against his own.

Then she drew away and they stared at each other.

At last Walker found his voice.

"You shouldn't have come," he said gruffly. "You—you darned lovable little fool."

Waunu cleared his throat noisily and Lonna, startled by the sound, turned, blushing to the roots of her glistening hair.

"I have been studying the wall of earth that fell into the river," Waunu said sternly. "There is room to drag our craft over the top and escape to Theba."

Walker grinned.

"That's not all you've been studying."

All three of them laughed, and the tension was broken. Lonna's hand sought Walker's and clutched it tightly.

"We'll have to return with all possible speed," she said with a note of anxiety in her voice. "The others may need our help."

Walker's thoughts raced back to the city and the men who had marched away to battle the Tebbans. He had been cut off from them for hours now. It would be morning before they could return.

"I hope that Tanner and your father are safe," he said, then added, "and, of course, Captain Warre."

Lonna shivered slightly. Her hand grew limp in his.

"And Captain Warre," she repeated lifelessly.

Waunu was already out of the boat waiting for them to follow.

CHAPTER XII

Ghost of Nick Freeman

KING ARNOO strode angrily up and down the council room in the palace. A bandage had been wrapped firmly around the little King's forehead and blood seeped through, leaving a brown hodge of honor on its surface. Standing about were the leaders of Theha's army.

"While we fight," Arnnoo raged, "he, the one who invented our weapons, spent his time rowing about a quiet river, far under the city. *It is safe down there.*"

To understand the King's anger, it was necessary to understand that the Thehan army had only been saved by the coming daylight. The weapons, many of them unused, were standing where they had been placed, before the gates of Theba. A thousand men had been killed. The walls were hattered to dust by Tehhan cannons. The city itself, though intact, lay wide open to invasion when the Tebbans returned.

"And there is no doubt that they will return," Rons Warre said calmly. "Tonight, when the desert is cool again, we will become slaves."

Though his voice was calm, Warre's emotions were keyed to a murderous pitch. He, like the remainder of them, was waiting for the return of their leader.

Tanner, alone, had faith in Bob Walker.

"He meant well. How do we know that his plan did not succeed? Perhaps, even now, the sun is burning down on a defenseless city of Tebba. Perhaps

Waunu and the earth-man are on their way here with the good news."

"Good news?" King Arnnoo stormed, then remembering that he had endorsed Walker's every plan, he subsided into a silence that was matched by every soldier in the room.

"Remember that the earth-man knew nothing of Tebban weapons," Tanner pleaded. "Our weapons are fine. They simply cannot be used for long distance assaults."

Rons Warre was a fighting man. He could not forgive anyone who had sent his men into a battle poorly prepared.

"Remember, also," he cried, "that, as an earth-man, and therefore supposedly a much higher type mentally, Walker should have anticipated the Tebban method of war. I think that we can place the responsibility directly on his shoulders."

Tanner sprang to the center of the room. His fists were clenched.

"All of you were ready to fight when he produced weapons that met with your satisfaction," he roared. "The earth-man saved my life once, and I'm not forgetting that. Wait until he returns. He will offer an explanation which will satisfy you."

Tanner was releasing all the pent up anger inside him.

"But if he has betrayed us? If he doesn't return?"

It was Warre who so keenly resented Tanner's speech.

"I wouldn't worry about that if I were you."

Startled eyes turned toward the door.

BOB WALKER stood just inside the door, his clothing covered with river silt and dripping with water. Beside him, her arm tightly about his waist, stood a forlorn Princess Lonna. Waunu, with a grin that turned his face as red as a tomato, waited behind the pair.

Pride was etched on every inch of his face, ing the pipe an enormous task.

"I have returned," Walker said, "Now, who thinks I purposely betrayed you? Who doubted my intentions?"

King Arnoo sighed with relief. He had been a fool to rage over something he did not understand.

Tanner ran to Walker's side and grasped his hand.

"What happened to you?" He noticed his sister for the first time. *"And Lonna? You look as though you'd been half drowned and actually enjoyed it."*

Lonna smiled. Walker felt her arm grow tighter about him.

"I think I *did* enjoy it," she said.

If Tanner noticed any change in his sister, he was too occupied with present circumstances to think about it.

"Did you fulfill your mission to Tebba?" he asked breathlessly.

"The Tebbans won't return again," Walker said. "We destroyed the reserve tank and blew up the pipe."

Waunu could remain silent no longer.

"The earth-man sent a good portion of Tebba up to the sky and he also saved Princess Lonna's life." Waunu's voice rose to a wrathful shout. "If there are men here who doubt his power or his sincerity, I will consider it an honor to beat their few remaining brains to a pulp."

Not a man in the room had any intention of accepting the challenge.

A VAST army of workmen had struggled during the early morning hours, trying to excavate the broken intake pipe below Tebba. It was close to eight o'clock and they had made no visible headway. The explosion had rocked the entire city, breaking away huge portions of the seventh level. In the spot directly above the explosion, five levels had fallen, killing many and making the task of finding and repair-

ing the pipe an enormous task. Jim Brawn had known what would happen when the sun came, but he could not fully realize just how intense the heat would be.

Brawn had left Freeman's building and taken a supply of food and water with him to the seventh level below the city. Now, careful to retain all possible dignity, he had established himself in the house of a slave and placed a guard around the hut. He sat on a rough cot, smothering with heat and cursing himself for not having better sense.

Perhaps the Tebbans could withstand the heat for a few days. If they were able to get the pipe fixed within a reasonable length of time, the heat would be bearable. Brawn's body already dripped with perspiration. He felt the intolerable warmth creeping over him. Heat swept in waves down the shafts. The repair crews had to leave the site of excavation and retire to their homes. Tebba was beginning to suffer from the tortuous heat of the desert.

Panza was a slave and not a very valuable one. Panza had made more use of his brains, however, than did the usual Tebba. He had worked his way into Brawn's favor. The boy was hardly twenty, yet he had crossed the fire-desert a dozen times during the night, carrying dispatches to and from Tebba.

It was Panza who had brought Brawn news of the destroyed pipe and who had felt the sting of Brawn's boot when the earth-man lost his temper and sent the scout sprawling in the dust.

A terrible change took place within Panza when he arose stinging from the dirt that had scraped his face and horror stricken by the earth-man's insult. For a long time Panza had wondered if it were right for Free Man, the all powerful genius who had made Tebba a

dream city, to be hidden away in a torture tower while Brawn took his place. He had questioned Brawn quite honestly, feeling that an earth-man must be beyond the hate and greed of common slaves.

But the earth-man had reacted like a beast and all doubt was gone from Panza's mind.

Panza found the task of getting into the tower a simple one. He had served here for a few weeks, running the boxes which rose and fell in the shafts. The upper city was deserted. The Tebbans had gone below, with the first streaks of light. He ran swiftly through the deserted streets.

PANZA was clever. He knew that the sun-streaks which played about the court would burn him badly if he ventured across them. Carefully, he entered the hall leading to the elevators. They were deserted.

Forgetting caution now, he stepped into the first open door and pressed the control that shot him upward.

For a few seconds Panza hesitated before the door of the invisible cell. He had never been inside before, but he knew the torture was calculated to drive men mad. Shuddering, he threw the bolt and opened the door.

He stopped short at the threshold, his eyes wide with amazement. Before him was empty space. Yet, perhaps twenty feet away, a man was stretched at full length on a small silver square. In spite of the tattered clothing and upturned, bewhiskered face, Panza recognized Free-Man.

Within the mind of the slave boy a terrible conflict between duty and fear raged. Free-Man seemed to be lying above the roof-tops with no support beneath him. As Panza watched with mixed pity and horror, Free-Man moved slightly and his eyes turned to-

ward the door. He tried to cry out—to move. His lips worked slightly but no sound escaped.

Forgetting his own safety, Panza ran swiftly to his master. A little cry of surprise escaped his lips.

There was solid matter beneath his feet. He did not fall.

The cell was very hot. Sun-rays darted back and forth across the floor. Free-Man's leg was badly burned. His hair had been singed. Panza managed to roll him into a position where he could kneel and gather the pitiful figure in his arms. Panza was glad now that he had defied Brawn. He hurried toward the safety of the hall.

The sun was just blasting its way through the clouds above Tebba. The full force of its heat hit the cell and rolled into the hall like the flames from a blast furnace.

Panza ran down the hall to the elevator. The upper city would be bathed in living flame in ten more minutes. He must find a hiding place deep on the seventh level, and get water for Free-Man.

He cursed Brawn for committing so vile a crime against the people of Tebba. There would be a selection of unpleasant ways for disposing of Brawn. Panza felt that the treatment he had received, gave him a special place in planning and executing proper punishment.

BOB WALKER rose with effort. He watched with tired eyes, trying to understand the various reactions of the men about the council table. He had finished relating his experiences of the trip to Tebba.

"The Tebbans will not return tonight," he promised grimly. "Nor for many nights to come. With the water supply cut off, they face a crisis of their own."

King Arnoo cleared his throat. He watched the faces of Tanner, Waunu, Rons Warre and the others.

"I—I think," he said weakly, that we were a little hasty in judging the earth-man. Are there any here who still feel that Waunu's challenge should be answered?"

Silence followed his question. Walker shifted from one foot to the other. Then a chair scraped the floor and Rons Warre stood up. He left his place and moved swiftly to Walker's side. His smile was sincere as he faced the earth-man. He held out his hand.

"I was one of the first to condemn you," he said simply. "In the heat of battle I saw many men die, and it turned me against you. Now I see that you turned our work into a victory. We will be ready for the Tebbans if they come back."

Walker grasped Warre's hand firmly.

"Thanks," he said. "I was a fool to send your army out so poorly equipped. I can only thank my lucky stars that the second plan worked."

Tanner sprang to his feet.

"We should all acknowledge the earth-man's genius," he said. "We will be ready for the next battle."

Walker felt very ill at ease as every man rose and faced him.

"I don't think there will be another battle," he said. "At least, not here."

"What?" King Arnoo's mouth flew open. "But—but they will surely return?"

Walker hoped he was saying the right thing. Every eye was upon him.

"As they attacked us first, I suggest we meet them at the gates of Tebba, and give them as good as they gave us."

"What about our weapons?" Arnoo demanded. "We are no match for them."

Walker nodded.

"But I think we can meet them evenly matched," he said. The Tebbans are hard at work on the pipe. They must be suffering greatly from the sun. It hasn't troubled them for years and they are getting soft."

A nod of agreement came from Waunu, and Walker continued.

"If I am any judge, the battle was not Freeman's idea."

Gasps of amazement met this statement.

"Then—who?" Arnoo sputtered. "Who else would lead such an attack?"

"Jim Brawn," Walker answered. "The man Lonna thought was me."

"There is another earth-man in Tebba," Waunu interrupted sharply. "He is powerful and ruthless. He is capable. . . ."

"Of promoting just such a battle," Walker said.

"At first I hated Freeman as much as you do. Then I realized that Brawn had complete power over him. Brawn's word has always lulled Freeman into false security. I forgive Freeman for what he did to me. I can see now that he hates only Brawn.

"Not once in ten years did he attack Tebba, and yet he could have wiped Tebba out completely. If you had given him a chance, he could have made both cities rich and powerful."

They all listened closely now. Perhaps they were beginning to realize . . . ?

"But where is Free Man? He is in Tebba. Why does he allow this Brawn to control the army?"

Walker frowned.

"Brawn always handled Freeman cleverly. My guess is that Freeman is either dead or a prisoner."

"And it is your plan to strike back before the Tebbans can prepare another invading force?"

Walker was surprised, because Warre

had asked the last question. There was a note of trust in his voice that Walker felt grateful for.

"I think we can go by the river tunnel, use our fire-guns against the Tebbans and destroy Brawn. If Freeman is alive, I'm sure he'll listen to a reasonable plan for peace. If I'm wrong, you can judge for yourselves. Does that sound reasonable?"

It did.

ALONG the torch-lighted banks of the underground river a strange procession embarked. Rafts carried the fire-cannons. Soldiers, armed with fire-rifles huddled in silent groups along the edges of the rafts. Every boat, every bit of material that would float, carried the Theba army down the calm surface of the dark water.

The splash of oars and the hollow sound of voices were loud and unreal. On the largest raft, floating well ahead of the army, were the leaders. Plans were under way for the tunnel that must be blasted open under Tebba. The city must be taken by surprise.

Behind the army, moving slowly, well behind the last raft, was a tiny canoe. In it sat the girl who had not yet learned her lesson. Lonna Arnoo could not let her earth-man venture forth again without being close by if he needed her.

* * *

Resting as best he could under the full impact of the heat, Brawn stretched uncomfortably on the miserable cot. He reached for another glass of water, only to find that the supply was gone. He threw the pitcher across the room. It crashed against the wall and splintered into a thousand pieces. Outside the hut, a low, murmuring conversation stopped abruptly. A guard stared through the open door at the contorted, angry face of the earth-man. He looked

neither frightened or worried about Brawn's condition.

Brawn felt a new fear growing within him. There were thousands of men living here beneath the city. It was his job to keep them silent and respectful. If they turned on him for so much as an instant, he was doomed.

Since noon, he had felt the spirit of rebellion growing. There was still some satisfaction in knowing that Nick Freeman was dead. He wished he could have seen Nick frying under the first rays of the sun. There would be nothing left now but a scorched, shrivelled corpse.

Brawn chuckled. He tried to imagine what Nick would look like. He tried to control his laughter but it became wild and he couldn't stop. Curious eyes stared at him through the window. There was no respect written on the faces of his guards.

Brawn lay very still, trying to save his strength and to think clearly. Damn these fire-eaters. They were uncomfortable, but the heat didn't effect them as it did him. It was over a hundred above now and blasts of hellish heat continued to sweep down the air-shafts. His water was all gone. He steadied himself and arose on one elbow.

"You! Guard! Bring water."

No one stirred. He staggered to his feet and swore loudly. The effort was too much for him, and he sank back on the cot, panting and sick to his stomach.

"Water!" he shouted. "You damned fools, get water before I shoot the lot of you."

Nick Freeman—burned to a crisp—served on the Devil's toast.

Brawn laughed wildly. Poor old Nick, sitting up there in his fireless cooker. Done to a turn, with no one to turn him.

Brawn closed his eyes and tried to

imagine Lake Michigan stretching away in blue coolness from his home. His tongue moved eagerly over parched lips. It was nearly three-o'clock.

Nearly three?

Five hours more. Five blistering hours before the sun would go down. Then a bot, miserable night. He would try to sleep, and awaken to face the day all over again.

"In a minute I'm coming out and whip you devils," he shouted. "Bring water. Earth-men are Gods. *I'm a God, do you understand?*"

His voice was becoming weak and pitifully uncertain.

"Don't worry, Brawn. I'm coming with your precious water."

Brawn rolled over, startled by the familiar voice. He stared toward the open door with red, frightened eyes.

A man stood in the door, steadying himself against the wall. His face was covered with a heavy beard. His hands and face were raw and blistered. He stared down at Brawn.

"Nick," Brawn choked. He caught his breath and tried to speak again. "Good old Nick, roasted by the Devil and sent back to haunt me."

He struggled to his feet, and rushed toward the door. Freeman tried to dodge and went down under Brawn's weight.

Brawn kept running. He knew they were trying to trip him. Knew that the guards were close. This section of the seventh level, near the hut, was blasted away. A huge, black pit opened into the mud below. He raced for the edge of the pit, knowing it gave him his one chance for escape. He heard the crowd of men behind him. The ragged lip of the pit was close now. Brawn didn't hesitate. With a desperate bound, he cleared the edge and crashed into the soft mud far below.

The fall knocked the wind out of him.

He lay still trying to regain his strength. For the moment he was safe. Above, he saw the excited faces of the Tebbans, staring blindly into the darkness. He crawled across the mud on his hands and knees, deeper into the underworld that house the pipes.

He had escaped the Tebbans and the ghost of Nick Freeman.

CHAPTER XIII

No Finer Reward

THE reserve-tank had been blown to the sky by Walker's TNT charges. The river now flowed from the cave across the shapeless remains of the tanks, and drained into the desert.

At the end of the cavern, where the river drifted into the sunlight, the army of Theba halted. Fire-cannons were brought up and placed along the banks of the river. Aiming carefully at the spot where the intake pipe showed its dead, empty mouth, the Thebans released a steady discharge of withering fire against the wet clay. While Walker waited eagerly for results, the cannon continued to blast a trail beneath Tehha.

He knew that if the men protected themselves well, and drifted swiftly beneath the city, the sun would have little time to harm them. A half hour passed. Walker's eyes never left the crumbling, deepening tunnel.

Far behind, halted in the shadows, Lonna waited in her canoe.

A shout of triumph rose from the tunnel. The water started to move sluggishly, then poured forward with renewed power, to plunge out of sight into the newly formed tunnel.

Walker sighed with relief. It would be safe now to follow the river on the rafts.

"Let the light rafts go ahead," he

shouted. "The riflemen will attack first, although I think we will take them without bloodshed."

A half-hundred small rafts shot into the sunlight, swirled around and darted out of sight into the new tunnel. Then, a few at a time, the others followed. Walker waited until last, praying that his men would not run into an ambush ahead of him.

They would find a place to beach the rafts and make a trail to the upper levels. The Tebbans were in for a surprise that they didn't expect.

* * *

Brawn was content. He had moved several hundred yards away from the place he had fallen. Now, hidden between two huge boulders, the mud covered him so completely that searching Tebbans had passed close by without suspecting his presence. It was cooler down here, and the mud felt good, packed around his body.

Brawn lay still for almost an hour, gaining strength and planning his escape. He would wait for night and find his way above, to Freeman's building. He was sure that the sun hadn't destroyed Freeman's equipment in so short a time. If he could only find the secret of the scanner, he could escape. Even Chicago was preferable to his hell-hole.

His imagination was beginning to play tricks on him. The earth against which he crouched seemed to be growing warm. He remained still, laughing at himself, until he was sure that the heat grew stronger. The mud hardened on his body and he started to perspire freely. He stood up, staring about in bewilderment. Under the mud he thought he heard a loud, hissing sound.

The mud grew brittle and the hard clay started to crack open. Brawn crouched forward, listening. The sound

was louder, like an acetylene torch biting into steel.

Fright swept through him once more. He turned and ran wildly away from the sound. Ten feet to his left a white-hot flame broke through and hissed loudly as water trickled after it. Then another flame, and another. A flood of water swept into the cavern.

Brawn ran away from it swiftly, retreating deeper and deeper under the city. The water followed with a roar, gaining volume by the second.

Behind him a huge section of earth broke away and came heaving forward in a solid wall. White, foaming water twisted and rolled through the opening. Brawn sprang to the top of a boulder and wrapped his arms around it tightly. The water spread out swiftly and started to rise.

Another tidal wave swept in, covered his head and pulled savagely at his body. Brawn was too weak now to fight. A gasp of terror parted his lips, and ended in a gurgle of death as he sank beneath the surface of the flood.

A STRANGE sight greeted Bob Walker as he drifted into the newly formed lake beneath the city of Tebba. The Theban army had beached their rafts, and the fire-cannons were trained in a great opening toward the city above. One blast of those cannons would bring down level after level of the city.

But it would also destroy every man who waited in the pit below.

Walker had planned to draw the weapons up to the levels above and cover every street, until the Tebbans surrendered.

The two armies had reached a curious deadlock. The Tebbans had heard the rush of water. As the first rafts swept into sight, they rushed their own weapons around the top of the pit and

placed them in firing position. If either army fired, all were doomed. The Tebbans could not shoot at the men below, or a return fire would destroy them.

No one knew what to do next.

Walker waited, standing knee deep in the mud beside the lake. A small, exhausted looking man appeared at the rim of the pit. He wore Nick Freeman's clothing, but his body was thin and wasted. He leaned on a warrior for support.

"My men will obey me," he shouted. "Tell the warriors of Theba to leave their weapons and come out of the cavern. There will be no battle."

Walker grasped King Arnoo's arm.

"It's Nick Freeman," he said quietly. "Or his ghost. We'll have to trust him."

But Arnoo wasn't easily convinced. He had walked into traps before. The little king was still determined to take no chances.

"How can we believe him? He may betray us."

His voice drifted up to the men above.

"It was Brawn who led the attack against Theba," Freeman shouted. "I escaped from the tower where he kept me imprisoned. Brawn tried to escape and fell into the pit. He has drowned by this time. With him gone, the Tebbans are willing to pay a just reward for what they have done. I have no quarrel with Theba. My hatred for Brawn has been revenged."

Walker stared at the half-lighted faces around him.

"I believe him," he said simply. "To look at Freeman is proof that he has suffered at Brawn's hands. I'm going to meet him. Will I be alone?"

He turned and started up the steep slope to a spot just below the rim of the pit. A cheer went up from the Tebbans.

Tanner followed him without hesi-

tation. Waunu shrugged his broad shoulders and left King Arnoo standing with Captain Rons Warre. Warre stared at the King, awaiting his decision. Arnoo turned to the warriors who manned the weapons.

"I'm a fool, perhaps," he called. "But make the best of it. Desert your cannon and, if you fear betrayal, escape with the rafts."

Not a man turned away. The muzzles of the cannon were turned downward. Arnoo puffed slowly up the trail. Rope-chairs had already been lowered and Walker was on his way up. He could see the friendly, anxious face of Nick Freeman smiling down at him from above.

FREEMAN'S banquet was given in honor of the visiting Tebbans. His building was open to them all, and it contained wonders beyond their fondest dreams. Perhaps King Arnoo was less impressed by the huge bathtub that Freeman owned, than were some of the others. After all, Freeman and Arnoo were equal in that one respect. Arnoo was secretly grateful to Walker for paying him such a high tribute.

Freeman used the tiny telo-ray to remove dozens of walls on the main floor of the building. One huge room had been created. Hundreds of flashily dressed nobles wandered about, listening with awe to the mechanically produced music that flooded the room from perforated walls.

They, the Tebbans, could never hope to possess such wealth as this. But they were fortunate to have two earthmen who would assist them in rebuilding Theba and Tebba into twin cities of peace.

"The river," Walker explained, as he stood beside Freeman at the banquet table, "will be a highway between the cities. The reserve tank will be

covered to protect it from the sun. Boats will move continually between the cities."

Waunu was grinning happily at Walker's left.

"And swimming?" he asked. "Will you teach us to swim cleverly, as we did in the pipe?"

Freeman smiled, placing an affectionate hand on Walker's shoulder.

"You'll have the greatest swimming-pools known to earth-man," he promised. "Huge bath-tubs to hold thousands of people. Lighted like daylight. We'll help you create a civilization beyond the wildest dreams of earth."

They listened with hearts that beat heavily against tightly fitted jackets. King Arnno offered a speech of gratitude and became so emotionally overcome that tears sprang to his eyes.

"Before we taste the food the Tebban women have prepared," Freeman said, "I wish to speak of my friend, Bob Walker."

Walker felt his collar growing tight. His cheeks burned.

"When Walker first came to Tebba," Nick Freeman continued, "I thought he was the man I hated. I committed a grave injustice. I owe him a reward that will erase those terrible days from his memory. I offered to send him back to earth. . . ."

A cry of dismay arose.

"He must stay with us," Tanner cried. "We need him in Theba."

Freeman smiled.

"He promised to stay," he said. "The

reward will be infinitely more precious than that. It is something that came here with the invading army. A frail object that drifted down the stream behind the troops."

Walker's face mirrored the bewilderment that was visible on a hundred faces.

Freeman turned and clapped his hands together sharply. A room opened at the far side of the room. Two servants entered. They were clad in long evening gowns that Freeman had designed personally.

Between them, blushing charmingly, walked Princess Lonna Arnno.

Freeman had outdone himself in creating her gown. It was low necked and flowed gently downward around her ankles. Gold and silver coins covered every inch of the fabric. A crown of the same material covered her dark hair. Freeman bowed low as she walked gracefully to Walker's side.

"I'll confess that I had little to do with bringing this dazzling creature to my friend," Freeman said with a sigh. "But, is there any man here who would suggest a finer reward?"

Even Captain Warre smiled proudly as Walker hesitated a brief instant, then swept Lonna into his arms. Eyes turned obligingly away as their lips met.

Waunu dug a playful fist into Tanner's ribs.

"This is no surprise to me," he whispered hoarsely. "I have known for a long time how expertly the earth-man can make love."

SPIDER SAFETY

★

By R. ROBERTS

★

IN THOUSANDS of ways Mother Nature has provided for the safety of her flock of creatures, animal, vegetable, and mineral alike. Have you ever wondered why the wily spider never gets snared in his own web? The threads of his web, which glisten with drops of a viscid

secretion which entangles the legs and wings of other insects, have no effect on him. He is protected by an oily substance which prevents adhesion. The spider may be seen spreading this oily secretion on the body coating of tiny hairs which completely cover him.



The metal claws sank deep and blood spurted from the corpse

SENTIMENTAL MONSTER

by LEE FRANCIS

Knowit was only a robot—and his job was to take down books from the library shelves for his master. But it seemed that he was capable of other things, ghastly beyond belief . . .

THE room was three floors high. It was a strange room, three sides of it made up of shelves of books, the fourth, all windows that opened the view to vast gardens. Normally the room, a library was peaceful enough. Tonight, violence was there. The world was here in this room. Each bit of the world's history was bound into one of the many volumes. Every bit of writing recorded by man was here. If you stood up on the third balcony and looked down at the cold marble floor, you would have caught your breath and held tightly to the railing. Tod Williams was doing

that at this moment, his breathing quickened, his heart pounding so loudly that he could hear it.

He had come in quietly from the living room, and was about to descend to the library. What he saw down there made him stop short, and his eyes widen with shocked surprise.

"Ben?"

His voice made that one word, at once, a horrified question, a plea for an answer he knew would not come. Ben James was hunched over his desk at an odd angle. Tod Williams knew he would not answer, even before he called Ben's name.



The desk seemed to rest in a floating pool of light, the remainder of the vast room being dimly lighted. Ben James was sprawled forward, head on the desk, arms spread out on the desk top as though they were separate parts of a body that did not belong to the man. At the far end of the room, Knowit, the librarian-robot, stared down like a huge, somehow barbaric God, crouching in the semi-darkness.

Before he went down the narrow, winding stairs, Tod Williams knew that Ben James was dead, that he had died violently.

Williams found himself staring wonderingly at Knowit. The head of the robot was dimly visibly, sitting atop the box-like steel body. Williams knew every inch of that metallic monstrosity. It has always given him the creeps to watch those long tentacles snap out to the farthest corners of the room, grasp a book with suction-cup fingers and deposit it on Ben James' desk. If those tentacles turned to murder? If they shot to a man's throat, instead of toward a book?

Tod Williams suppressed a shudder. His feet pounded on the steel stairs, then made loud sounds on the bare marble floor. He stood there, staring down at the corpse of a man who had two hours before, helped him eat roast beef and baked potatoes. He lifted one arm gently, and placed it back on the desk. The blood spread into a wider pool, making the coat sleeve red.

He thought he heard a sound, and whirled toward Knowit. Knowit's eyes, square, red, were blinking. He had no way of knowing why. Knowit could be signaling hatred, danger—even sympathy. Knowit was distressed, for his eyes only blinked that red signal when he was excited.

Williams hurried up the stairs. In the living room he found Lela James,

Ben's daughter. They had been talking when he decided to go down to the library.

"Lela," he said, and hesitated. How did you tell a girl that her father was dead? That he was lying in his own blood, down there in the library.

Lela was resting on the divan. She had a way of relaxing that made men look at her. Her body, clad in a soft blue robe, was smooth and well formed. Her hands graceful, her nails a soft rose.

She sat up quickly, somehow sensing the alarm in his voice. Every movement was clean. She smiled at Tod, thinking she knew why he stammered so—why he acted strangely.

"Tod," she said in a reproving voice, "you've asked Dad about us, and he's gone and teased you again. He knows we love each other. He knows we're going to be married, and he *likes* the idea. Don't let the old tease get you excited. He's making you fight for me—and if I'm not worth fighting for?"

She stopped talking, the color draining slowly from her face. Her eyes were suddenly full of shock.

"Tod—something is wrong. . . ."

He nodded, tried to speak and choked. After a while he managed to tell her.

"Lela, I went down to talk to Ben. I was going to tell him that we were going to get married right away—to-night. Lela,—he. . . ."

They understood a lot about each other. They understood how each other felt.

"Tod—Dad's ill?"

"Ben's dead, Lela. I think Knowit murdered him."

THE words hurt him. She was sobbing suddenly, her face pressed to his shoulder. She was trying to ask him *why?* Why would anyone, even

Knowit want to harm Ben. Decent, quiet Ben James wouldn't even watch the beef on his own farm slaughtered because he was so soft hearted. Her words, delivered between sobs, didn't make sense. Tod Williams would have pushed any other woman away for not getting better control of herself. He knew how much Ben meant to her. Knew that in a moment she would get control—become cool again, with her grief locked inside her.

"Lela, this won't do any good."

She straightened her hair then and stood before him, tears still on her face, as Harry Fromm, slim, bespectacled, and frowning, came in.

He stared near-sightedly at them. "Excuse me for—interrupting."

Williams suddenly felt a weird urge to laugh aloud at the thin, pale faced man. If he laughed, it would be the chuckle of an insane man. The thing had stirred Williams—way down deep. He'd have to start doing something pretty soon about Ben's body. You didn't just leave a thing like this undone. Murder was a terrible thing, and he was gradually aware of that. He whirled on Fromm.

"You didn't interrupt anything between Lela and I. If you can concentrate on one fact for a minute, get this. Ben James is dead. Call Sparta City and tell Joe Spence the Sheriff to get here as soon as he can."

It was his nerves, he thought, that made him snap at Fromm like that. He was sorry even now, but he couldn't say anything else. Fromm had looked terrible for a second. Then, without a word, he shot out the door like a rabbit. He was talking now over the phone in the hall.

Harry Fromm worshipped Ben James. You could sense that by the way that book had fallen from Fromm's hands. Harry Fromm knew no one

but Ben James gave a damn if he was dead or alive. Ben hadn't needed a librarian. Knowit took care of all that work. Harry Fromm had stayed because of his long years of service before Knowit was completed. Harry was just extra baggage now, still drawing pay because, like a faithful horse, he had been turned out to green pastures by Knowit's coming.

Tod Williams heard Lela sigh, and pivoted to catch her as she fell. He might have known that being a woman, she would faint. It had taken time for the full realization of Ben's death to overtake her. He carried her to the divan and placed her carefully, her head on a pillow. The phone was ringing loudly. He heard Fromm answer it. He knew automatically that someone, maybe the paper, was calling to confirm the news of Ben's death. He looked down at Lela, who had all the appearance of an expensive French doll, encased in fine silk. She was as lifeless as a doll at this moment.

Tod Williams swore softly at the person, or the robot, that murdered Ben James. A violent act, and in a second, all their lives were plunged into a hellish nightmare of death.

SHERIFF JOE SPENCE stood near the library door. He looked at Lela with eyes that were suspiciously moist. Joe Spence was a small man, garbed in a brown hunting outfit, high-top boots—a custom he had expected to make use of when Harry Fromm called. His hair was curly and snow white. His face, thin and brown, gave away all his sixty years.

"You better stay up here," he told Lela doubtfully.

It had taken him just ten minutes to come from Sparta City. He had driven so fast that it frightened him when he thought about it. He held the door

open for them. Lela acted as though she hadn't heard him speak. She followed Tod Williams to the balcony above the death room.

Everything looked the same as it had when Williams left it. Lela's face was pale and set. She held the rail tightly as they followed Spence down the winding stairs.

At the foot of the steps, Lela paused. "I'll—wait here."

Their footsteps were loud on the marble floor. Harry Fromm, over some of the shock he had betrayed before, went directly toward the robot. He found the switch at the base of the metal librarian, turned the switch and the lights behind Knowit's eyes blinked out. They were all more at ease without those blinking orbs examining their every move.

Joe Spence tipped Ben James' head back gently and felt under his coat. Tod Williams helped the Sheriff carry the body gently to the couch. They covered it with a blanket. There was a clean, round hole entering the body above the heart. Blood had congealed on Ben's coat. Williams turned once to glance at Lela. She had turned away. Joe Spence, who had said nothing, spoke:

"No powder wounds, yet, there should be. The wound looked as though a bullet had entered. There should be. . . ."

His voice trailed off.

"No one heard a shot," Williams said. "We were all in the living room. We should have heard."

"Why does it have to be a bullet wound?" Harry Fromm asked harshly. "Why couldn't it have been a round, pointed instrument? Knowit could have. . . ."

He stopped short, staring at the robot.

"He was alone down here—with

Knowit. You can't trust a machine. It could have turned on him."

Joe Spence said drearily:

"You've seen too many Frankenstein movies, Fromm."

THE big lights on the ceiling of the room flashed on. Williams pivoted. Lela was standing near the switch.

"It's—less ghostly with them," she said. "I—don't like the dark. He was working almost in the dark. It frightens me."

Harry Fromm spoke.

"Look—Knowit's right hand."

Joe Spence reached out and touched the steel index finger. There were six fingers. There should have been six suction cups, one for each finger. One was missing. The seven inch length of steel was pointed and rounded. It was covered with blood.

"The murderer, I guess," Spence said in a tired voice.

* * *

What is the stuff called *Soul*? Does it occur only in man? The human body is a machine. Knowit knew all about humans. Inside Knowit's brain, a great amount of knowledge was stored. Alone, he stared down with puzzled, blinking eyes at the deserted library.

Who had turned his power on?

Knowit wondered, with pain inside his brain, where they had taken The Man Who Owned the Desk. Knowit worshiped The Man Who Owned the Desk. It was the Man who invented Knowit, made his presence here possible. Knowit remembered it all from the first day.

The library was dark, save for the faint moonlight that bathed the cold floor. I suppose I've been here for a long time. The steel body, the tentacles, the fingers, must have been here before me. My brain must have been

fashioned last and made a part of my body. I was first "alive" after my "head" was attached and the power was fed into it.

I was "born" with an amazing amount of knowledge. I know that I owe all that to the Man. It was his cunning that brought me here.

For a moment, Knowit stopped this reasoning, and stared at the walls of books. The place was lonely with the Man gone. The books, stacked row upon row, didn't interest Knowit without the Man being here to encourage that interest.

Knowit tried hard to think again. There had been four of them here. Three men and the girl. The Man had been here also, without his power to think or live. The Man's power had been turned off, brutally, without the Man having anything to say or any protest to make. The one who turned off the Man's power came back with the others.

Now the Man was gone and Knowit was unhappy. One of them, the one with the glass circles over his eyes, had turned off Knowit's power. Now, someone had turned it on again.

Knowit couldn't guess who had turned on his power again. Whoever had done it, was gone from the room in the darkness before Knowit could see who it was.

Knowit thought he knew why his power had been given back. He was quite sure he knew why. He stared down into the darkness and waited. Knowit was very patient, and strange sensations stirred inside him. Knowit was feeling hate—and a desire to kill.

Suddenly he knew that the Man was dead, and would never return. Knowit was angry, but more than that, he was alarmed. There was no one else to understand him or make him happy. The desire to kill grew more pronounced

as the moon rose higher and the library became full of its light.

I WONDER if another Man will come who understands my power? Knowit's square, red eyes were suddenly full of moisture. It was a strange feeling. Knowit had never cried before. Even the Man would have laughed. The Man would have said that it was moisture condensing inside the metal head. Knowit wondered if the Man had ever been aware of the emotions inside Knowit. He doubted it. How would even the Man realize that a robot was capable of emotions.

What was soul?

Knowit had heard "soul" spoken of often. He had absorbed much knowledge from the books. Had he "soul"? Most of Knowit's thoughts were disturbing to him. At lot of the little motors were at work inside him now, making him hate. Making him feel heartbreak and loneliness.

Idly, he allowed one tentacle to shoot aloft. Let six rubber-cupped fingers rub slowly over the bindings of books. There was no elation in him from touching those books. No longer were they interesting. They were dead. As dead as the Man.

Someone had remained to turn on his power once more.

Why?

WHY?

Was someone nursing this hate that was in him? Was someone helping make the vast decisions inside his complicated, bewildered brain?

* * *

Harry Fromm said:

"I suspected it from the first, just as Tod did. I begged Ben not to stay alone in that room at night."

Fromm's usually mild eyes were alive with excitement. Lela James sat forward on the divan, her hands under her

chin, lips parted slightly. Spence was still here, smoking, standing by the fireplace. Outside, a long, black sedan was driving slowly away from the house.

"If Tod and you both felt that way, why didn't you talk to some of us," Spence asked. "Ben was my friend too. Maybe I could have . . ."

Lela said in a tired voice: "Ben would have laughed at you. Tod told me he wondered about Knowit. I guess the idea of a huge robot being alone with a man for so long frightened most of us. Afterward, we all laughed at our own fears."

"Not I," Fromm snapped. "I never trusted . . ."

Tod Williams laughed shortly.

"Knowit stole your job, Harry. That's one reason you had no place for him in your heart."

Fromm started to object, but Spence broke in.

"No need to quarrel," he said mildly. "We need all the help we can give each other. Without Ben, you three better stick together. It'll take all three of you to convince a jury that a robo is guilty of murder."

Harry Fromm said he was sorry. His nerves were on edge.

Spence said:

"Just how does this robot work? Ben told me about him a long time ago. Never came up to watch him do the job. Always thought Ben was a little touched on that one subject."

"He wasn't," Williams said. "Ben was way out in front on the subject of brains and their use. Knowit was a good idea. He's the first mechanical librarian ever built. He accepted brain impulses or 'thought waves' sent out by Ben. Ben thought of a subject he wished to study. Immediately, Knowit's 'brain' picked up the subject and his tentacles shot out and picked out the necessary books. Ben saved long hours

of searching for the right volumes. Never had to leave his desk. The tentacles could have shot out in the same manner, plunging a steel 'finger' into Ben's chest."

Lela shuddered, picturing the horrible details of what took place in the library. Joe Spence said he was sorry that their talk had to hurt her so. There wasn't anything else he could do tonight. He'd come up first thing in the morning.

"Meanwhile," he said, "keep that library door locked. Stay out of it."

HE LEFT the house as quietly as he had come. Lela and Tod Williams went inside as he passed out of sight in a bend of the walk. Looking back, Joe Spence saw the door close and the light go out. He got in his car and drove a dozen rods down the road. He stopped, locked the car and went swiftly back up across the garden to a tree barely fifty feet from the library windows. He sat down with his back to the tree, thanked the Lord that he had worn the heavy hunting clothes, and started to search out every nook and cranny of the grounds with his sharp eyes. He pulled the warm collar of his coat up around his neck and prepared for a long stay.

* * *

Clouds scudded across the face of the moon, and the night was cool. Spence closed his eyes to relieve the hot strain from his eyeballs. In spite of the matter of fact attitude he had taken before the others, Ben James' death brought the old man real pain. Someone would go back to the library tonight. He wondered who it would be.

He had a hunch about Ben James. Ben had always trusted the robot, and Ben knew more about most things than any man alive. Of course that was only his, Joe Spence's opinion, but a man

had to have faith in his own hunches, or no one else would. Maybe that was why Joe Spence had switched Knowit's power on again just after the others had left the library the last time.

* * *

Tod Williams left the house just after midnight. Harry Fromm had gone to his room.

"Why not ride into town with me," Williams suggested to Lela. "Mom can fix a room for you. You'll feel better—away from here."

Lela stood near him on the porch, shivering. It was entirely the chill night that made her feel so cold and alone. She had courage, though. She thought of Ben, and how Ben would rather have died than leave the house on the hill. Ben *had* died, and she wasn't leaving—yet.

"I'll stay tonight. If I need someone, Harry's here."

Tod didn't urge her. He couldn't leave, not knowing she was here alone. At the thought of Harry Fromm being any help to anyone, his lips formed themselves into a tight little smile.

It was chance that caused Tod Williams to pass within ten feet of Joe Spence as he crossed the garden and hid himself in the lilac bushes below the library window. Joe Spence saw him, but gave no sign. Williams chose a spot near the window where he could see into the library. The two men were separated by a small hedge.

Companions, keeping vigil. The moon was out now, moving swiftly through the clouds, as though afraid it would not reach its destination before morning.

KNOWIT blinked his red eyes.

Hours had passed swiftly. In a manner of speaking, Knowit was aware of time and its passing. However, it

meant little to him, for he was ageless, and could he kept living for centuries. Knowit was conscious of human thoughts, although he never troubled to associate himself with them. Knowit had stored within his brain, all knowledge. The history of life was there, and of death. There were reams of material sorted neatly away in his head. He sat motionless, for his tentacles were all that moved outside the shell of his body, and he had no will to move them now. Only the faint whirr of Knowit's metal brain, and the blinking eyes, signaled that the robot was alive at all.

They are puny things at best, Knowit thought, and was shocked to realize that he was worried about humans. Of course the Man Who Owned the Desk had been different. The Man had been a god, in Knowit's mind. He had made Knowit, and controlled him, and made a place for him in this world. He had caused Knowit's slim, tentacle arms, his rubber capped fingers, to grasp books from the shelves. He had inserted into Robot, the knack of finding any bit of knowledge that the books contained.

And so they were a pair, Knowit the perfect mechanical servant, The Man, who profited by Knowit's presence and help.

Now the Man was gone. Knowit's emotions were beginning to clarify themselves, and his emotions were not pleasant.

* * *

Lela James tried to read. She couldn't. She arose from the divan, still seeing clearly with her mind, the image of the still figure at the library desk. She cried, quietly, wishing she had taken Tod's advice and gone to his mother. After a time, she donned her pajamas and tried to sleep. It was no good. Ben was dead, and part of her died with

him. She put on a soft, blue wool robe and went back to the living room. Her cigarette tasted bitter.

The Sheriff, Lela thought, seemed to treat the whole thing oddly. Why hadn't he stayed here? Poor Joe Spence had thought a lot of Ben. They'd known each other from childhood. Perhaps Joe couldn't face it any more tonight. Maybe he felt as Lela did—lost.

The bloody steel finger—the robot, sitting still—aloof, as though its case was perfect and could not be proven. As though—

Suddenly she was afraid. She stared at the library door—then away. The door seemed to be beckoning her. Seemed to be saying:

"Come on. Open me. Pass through. There is someone in the library who waits. . . ."

A cold shudder went up her back. How did a person deal with a murderous robot? She tried to keep from staring at the library door. Knowit was down there.

Once she thought she heard footsteps in the hall. It frightened her more than she dared admit—even to herself. She tip-toed to the hall and listened. No sound. When she came back, she went directly to the library door, as though she had given up the fight against it, and wanted to enter.

She opened the door, went out on the balcony with hesitating steps and stood there, hands on the railing. The room was cold. The moonlight flooded it, making strange patterns on the floor below.

There were footsteps. Now they had come into the living room, and were close to her—close to the open door behind her. She shrank back against the wall—hardly daring to catch a short breath.

Someone was coming into the room—onto the balcony where she stood.

Joe Spence sprang to his feet. The high pitched, horrified scream had come from the library. He raced swiftly across the lawn, his wiry old body serving him well after hours in a cramped position. Ahead of him, Tod Williams sprinted.

Tod heard him and looked over his shoulder.

"Joe—where in. . . ." Then, as he ran, "You've been waiting. . . .?"

Spence saved his breath. They reached the library together. Spence saw a small boulder, part of a ring of stones that bordered a small garden. He scooped it up quickly and started breaking the glass out like a madman.

The windows splintered under his blows. The scream came again. There was a place now, big enough for a man to slide through, where there was no glass. He let Tod Williams go ahead. He heard Tod cry out:

"Lela—where are you?"

Then Lela was sobbing as though her heart would break, and Spence was with them, staring at the strange sight in the big room.

"It was Knowit," Lela cried. "I knew it had to be. There was no one else. No one who would. . . ."

Her head was buried in Tod's shoulder. He held her very tightly against him, so that she couldn't see.

KNOWIT sat at the end of the room. He could have no expression of hate or triumph on his face, for there was only a square box of steel. Yet, there was something triumphant about the eye. The eyes flashed wildly, like warning signals. Every motor in Knowit's body was buzzing like a huge serpent which had already struck.

Up near the third balcony, hanging in mid air, was the limp body of Harry Fromm. The corpse dangled there, Knowit's steel fingers driven half way

through its chest, Knowit's long, rigid tentacle projected stiffly upward from the robot's body.

There was a dead silence in the room. Joe Spence drew his heavy service pistol from his holster beneath the coat. He aimed carefully at Knowit's head, and fired three times, slowly, deliberately.

The motors stopped buzzing. The red eyes blinked out. Reluctantly, the tentacle started to relax, and Harry Fromm's corpse slipped from the hand and fell with a sickening thud to the marble floor. The tentacle dropped like a dead serpent, hitting his body with a resounding crack.

* * *

"I don't understand," Tod Williams said, "why the robot attacked Harry. The robot's power should have been cut off. I remember Harry doing that when we entered the room for the first time."

They were all standing in the living room, waiting for the long black car from Sparta City to come once more. Harry Fromm's body lay where it had fallen, in the library. Lela was calm again, her face drawn and pale. She held Williams' hand tightly, as though she was afraid that he would leave her.

Joe Spence said slowly:

"That's the whole explanation. I turned on the power again, after you left the library. I went back alone, so that none of you would know. I wanted Knowit in working condition"

Lela's breath came sharply.

"But why?"

Spence shrugged.

"We all knew that Ben's robot was controlled only by him. Therefore, why would the robot destroy the one thing that it could thank for its presence here? Ben and the robot had a perfect understanding. Therefore, so far as I was concerned, the robot was innocent."

"One of you was guilty. I had to

suspect everyone until two of you were proven innocent. Harry was the best suspect. He had reason to hate Ben—or more directly, the robot. Harry Fromm was an expert librarian, but Ben no longer had any use for him. Harry was here only because Ben was too good hearted to fire him.

"Harry removed the rubber cup, placed blood on Knowit's finger and told us he suspected the machine. *Why did Harry turn off Knowit's power?*"

"BECAUSE he was afraid, in some manner, the robot would harm him?"

Spence nodded.

"I thought it had to be Harry, but I had no proof. I wanted Knowit to be 'awake' when the murderer came back to the library. One of you had to destroy Knowit, so that he would be unable to function again. I waited until he came back—that's all."

Williams sighed.

"We both did," he said, "We made one mistake. We forgot that Lela was still in danger."

"In a way," Spence said, "it's really not a thing you could take into court. I don't think it would do any good to convict a robot, not under our present laws."

"Harry had a gun," Lela said, as though she were still in a trance—still living those moments on the balcony. "He was going to kill me when he found me there. Knowit saved my life."

"It's possible," Williams said, "that Harry was frightened, and went there to destroy Knowit, for fear of what Knowit could do to the rest of us. He might have been panicky. He was like that."

Spence said slowly:

"Anything's possible, and we can never prove our case. We'll never know anything for sure. I had to destroy

the robot, because of that one point. Perhaps Knowit avenged a murder. Perhaps Knowit himself had murdered twice. I couldn't be sure. I couldn't take that chance."

"You had no choice," Lela said. "Either way we know nothing of the

robot or its brain. Perhaps, if soul is what Ben thought it was, Knowit and Ben won't remain separated. I don't know if a machine can lift itself to such heights or not. If Ben knew, then perhaps he knows now where to look for his perfect librarian."

IRELAND AND ARAN

LINKS TO ATLANTIS

By H. C. GOBLE

Is Ireland one of the concrete links we have today of the ancient continent of Atlantis?

THE more one studies the British Isles, the more one is convinced that there is a great story yet to be told here . . . probably the true answer to the riddle of Pan, Lemuria and Atlantis.

It is not even definitely decided whether Ireland is a part of the same land mass as the eastern portion of the British Isles . . . many factors seem to indicate that Ireland is the vestigial remnant of one continent while England is the remnant of a land mass once connected with Europe, but not with the same mother-continent as Ireland. If this theory is true, the most logical mother-continent for Ireland is mythical Atlantis . . . and there are many factors to bear this out.

In Portuguese records of 1476, Atlantis is referred to also as Antilia, or "Chain of Islands," a word easily recognizable in its later application to the Island Chains in the East and West Indies. And in the same records, Antilia is also referred to as *Isla de Brazil* and *Illa Verde* or "Green Island." Its location is given as 100 miles west of Ireland. It is also called "Isle of the Seven Cities."

Now the only logical Islands in such a direction from Ireland are the three Islands of the Aran group, those barren, rocky thanklessly poor Islands that are today the home of a few scattered fisher folk . . . oddly enough of a quite different stock than the neighboring Irish, and with a language that is not by any means pure Gaelic . . . containing phrases and words that are more than mere dialect differences.

And, sure enough, one of these Islands is known in this dialect as "Hy Brasil," an easy corruption of *Ile* or *Isla Brazil*.

But why should these Islands be known in French, English and Portuguese as "the Green

Island"? The mind at once leaps to the age-old references to Ireland itself as the "Emerald Isle," the Island whose "greenness" is a watchword. Could "Green Isles" refer to a time when the Aran group was an integral part of Erin, fertile and productive? Further weight is lent to this theory by the fact that the Portuguese records also give "Hy Brasil" as the source of Brazil Wood and Brazil nuts . . . and anyone who has seen Aran knows that scarcely a ragged shrub now finds foothold on any of the three Islands.

This leads us to the discovery a few years ago of a remarkable series of stone forts on the Aran Islands. The Islands, hitherto unfruitful, turned out to be the location of a group of marvellously constructed fortresses of stone . . . the forts of Dun Aengusa, Dun Onacht, Dubh Cathail and Dun Conchohair . . . which date either from the very last of the Stone Age or the very first of the Bronze Age. The construction of these forts, the crude by later standards, puts the beginnings of our own Western Civilization sometime previous to 4500 B.C. . . as far back as the great cities of Ur and Tish in the East . . . until twenty years ago supposed to be the very beginnings of real civilization.

These fortresses are ascribed to the Firbolgs and Fomorians, two primitive peoples who made a battleground of stone-age Ireland itself, and who existed far into contemporary times. The Fomorians were believed to have originated on the North African Coast in the vicinity of what was later Carthage, and later made sea-strongholds on Aran, the Orkneys and the Shetland Islands, whence they raided the British Isles proper. They intermarried with the ape-like stone-age Firbolgs then occupying Ireland.

Now we must contend with how the Fomorians ever got from Africa to Ireland in the first place. They obviously possessed boats in the written legends of them many centuries later . . . but according to all stone-age archeology the best merchant marine that the Stone-Age could boast was circular skin coracles and dug-out canoes . . . none of which were remotely capable of travelling from Africa, up thru the choppy Irish Channel, or directly up the West Coast of Ireland to Aran, bearing intact enough people to conquer and populate a savage, well-defended territory.

It is far more logical to think that the Fomorians benefitted by a then existent land connection . . . part of the great Atlantean Continent . . . and made the trip by land in comparative comfort. And this ties in with the still-dominant thesis that our own (I use the phrase advisedly) civilization originated in the Euphrates Valley . . . and that the Fomorians brought with them a few of the minor advances of the East, such as building in stone.

ARCHEOLOGISTS of the conservative sort, in speaking of migrational waves, are very prone to ignore the difficulties of over-water transportation for peoples as theoretically backward as some historical invasion waves are claimed to have been. The Tuatha De Danann, the highly civilized Nordics who worshipped the Goddess Diana, and who controlled the forces of nature to send a storm against the Milesians invading Ireland in 1000 B.C., are dismissed by the conservative archeologist as one of several waves of Celtic Invasion . . . that's all, brother! The Tuatha are not a part of official history . . . but they cannot be laughed off. They are present in the first records of the Milesian Irish, and are an active human part of Irish Legend for over a thousand years.

They are the closest comparison to the legendary picture of the Atlantean of any people in history. They first come into the picture as battling the Firbolgs and Fomorians for possession of Ireland. They are white of skin, blue or gray of eye, tall, slim and possessed of great magic, which they used to best the Firbolgs. Physical perfection seems to have been a must, for in the final battle against the Firbolgs their leader lost a hand . . . and was immediately deposed from his leadership until an artificer could make him a hand of silver. No man with even a trifling defect could be a leader of the De Danann.

But what stands out in all accounts of the Tuatha De Danann is that not once is a boat mentioned in connection with their comings or goings. The records say that after one battle the Firbolgs "fled" to a northern sea-stronghold of their relatives the Fomorians . . . but it does not say or even imply that they "sailed" there. In all the ancient legendry there is no hint, until the first Milesian invasion in 1000 B.C. that boats were used by any of the three tribes. Certainly this could be a strong evidence that land communication was possible over a wide area. The

Milesians were navigators and sea people . . . and it is *after* their coming that boats are mentioned. All this is vastly contrary to the ancient Edda of the Scandinavians, which incorporates the "long ship" or dragon ship from the very beginning.

Putting the pieces together, one may begin to get a fairly coherent picture of Atlantis. It is not impossible that rather than a huge separate continent, it was an integral part of both Europe, Africa and the Americas. It touched the cultures of every major nation in the world, and yet was no part of them, except for doubtful references to the Atlantean Battles with the Athenians. In Aran to the North, in Southern Rhodesia, in South America, in New Mexico and in Sardinia . . . in countless locations remote from each other, we find signs of a common culture.

Legend suggests that there were really two Atlantean cultures . . . a group of normal men who benefited by the teachings of a far more ancient godlike race . . . a benevolent race who took only a benign interest in the quarrels of the world about them, were helpful if possible but never interfered drastically with the course of civilization. The Irish legend of an ancient benevolent old man who appeared each millennium with his retinue to counsel and answer questions, suggests an Atlantean of the Godlike race strongly. This tale is duplicated in various forms throughout the legends of the world.

The Tuatha De Danann were probably merely some of these normal men who had acquired a smattering of Atlantean knowledge. As in all accounts of Atlanteans, the anachronistic use of sword and spear alongside super-civilized weapons suggests that the human Atlanteans were giving merely "a little learning" but not too much by the Ancients.

The Irish legend of the curse on Tara seems to fit in with this. In 1000 B.C. the invading Milesians or Scythians, conquered, or compromised with, the reigning Tuatha. A highly civilized nation was built up, until about 700 B.C., when the "priests" were accused of acquiring too much knowledge and using it for selfish advancement. Now "priest" in the ancient Gaelic meant "Druid," for the invaders had adopted the faith of the De Danann, discarding their own sea-god Macnan-nan Macle.

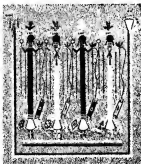
This implies that the remaining Tuatha De Danann were probably the priesthood of their conquerors. They were sentenced to exile, and in retaliation called down a force upon Tara which levelled all of Ireland to ruins . . . but strangely enough the Milesians still live . . . and there is no trace of the Tuatha. Could it be that the ancient ones blasted their own priesthood for their misuse of powers, while the Milesians, alive, but shorn of the acquired knowledge sank into a slough of uncivilized degeneracy and revolting, nauseating leachery.

War-interrupted excavations may make much of this clear . . . and bring to light still more on the ancient and now proven Atlantis.

SCIENTIFIC

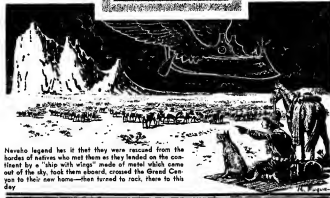


Almost incredible artistry is displayed in the sand paintings of the Navaho—and they are almost instantly destroyed!



The ancient lore of the Navaho tells of the Coyote who came from the north end fought with the earth-monster of the south where the Grand Canyon is today—and won.

The Wolf Totem of the Navaho bears a startling resemblance to the Inca crowns "Son of the Sun." It also resembles the Chen-Chen of Peru, and the whip "maestro" of Matto Grosso.



Navaho legend has it that they were rescued from the hordes of natives who met them as they landed on the continent by a "ship with wings" made of metal which came out of the sky, took them aboard, crossed the Grand Canyon to their new home—then turned to rock, there to this day.

MYSTERIES

TRIBAL MEMORIES OF THE NAVAHO

By L. TAYLOR HANSEN

Study of the legends and god mythology of the Navaho Indians presents many startling puzzles

OF ALL the Dene People, none is as well-known to the average white American as the tall, slender, picturesquely-handsome Navaho. We buy his rug for our floors and wear his ring upon our hands. Thus he who was originally not a weaver, has grown independent upon his desert reservation as a shepherd and weaver, while the red men of every tribe regard him as their official silversmith.

Yet for all his prosperity, for his tribe is increasing, the Navaho remains vitally and richly Indian. Because of the research of many scientists, foremost among whom is the work of Dr. Washington Matthews, we know that the music of the tribe contains thousands of songs of the most delicate poetic imagery, hundreds of which must be used for a single rite only, and repeated exactly as they have come down from the past. We have learned to appreciate the artistry of his exquisite sand-paintings which are made in song only to be immediately destroyed; and also, largely due to the scholarly work of Dr. Matthews, we realize that the pantheon of Navaho gods is as rich as either that of Greece or Rome.

It is curious today to remember that science did not always think so. Dr. Joseph Letherman once wrote a paper for the Smithsonian* to show that the Navaho had no religion whatsoever and that his music was confined to a series of grunts. However, this is explained by remembering that Dr. Letherman belonged to the era when the name "Navaho" was one to be widely dreaded, and most white Americans were of the opinion that the best way to deal with the Indian problem was to exterminate the Indians.

One of the most interesting Indians I know is the Navaho *peeb-la-kal* (worker in silver) Natab, under whose skillful fingers a Mexican coin becomes a work of art. Yet, I like best of all, the stories which go with the bits of jewelry. Once, lounging before his hogan and watching him work, I pointed to a bit of red petrified wood which he was fashioning into warm silver as I asked:

"What is the legend about that?"

"Once very long ago, when the earth was much

younger than it is now, Coyote had a great battle with the earth-monster. They fought fiercely near the vast crevasse of what is now the Grand Canyon."

"Coyote came down from the north?"

(I could hardly contain my joy for stumbling upon this little gem of ancient lore.)

"Yes, that is right. And the earth-monster came up from the south. They met and fought until the earth was all red. At that time there were great trees growing everywhere. Coyote tore them up by the roots for weapons and when he finished, and the massive earth-monster was at last defeated, the trees had all turned to stone. And today, one may still see them just as he had used them to strike down his enemy."

"Then petrified wood is connected with which animal?"

"Neither one for us—just with the battle. But some of the Pueblo people say that it is connected with the Twins, or the Snake who led them out of the Underworld."

Later I found the legend again in a geology, and repeated by the scientist to illustrate a primitive people's attempt to explain the mystery of the petrified forest. Yet to the student of the Navaho, this is the explanation for the whole basis of their culture. They speak the Athapascan tongue of the Wolf Totem, but they show some curious amalgamation with southern culture, for at the initiation ceremonies for children when the little ones learn that the fearful gods who approach across the desert, are not fierce demons after all, but uncle "Eagle-heart" with a mask on, the most terrible gods are most intriguing to the ethnologist. One of them is a horned figure with bulging eyes and huge teeth. In his hand he carries a long whip which he wraps around the bodies of the young initiates. He is dark. He is accompanied by his wife who is painted white. She scatters corn meal toward the cowering and terrified children. He is, of course, The Dragon.

As one gasps in astonishment, one recognizes parts of the costume. This fringe of red horsehair around his forehead is the Inca crown of "Son of the Sun"! And these knitted stockings upon the wife, who is called by the Navaho "Hoaste

*Smithsonian Report of 1855.

Boad," are identical with those upon the ancient sculptured pottery depicting the life of long-dead Chan-Chan in Peru. He moves with a similar step to that of the "Maestro" who carries the whip, in far-away Matto-Grosso of Brazil. One also is immediately forced to remember the "Governor" in the Matchline dances of the Tarahumaras of Mexico and the same non-dancing figure among Yaqui dancers.

The only sound which this god makes is a high-pitched yodel of "Hu-tu-tu-tu" in approval at the verse of the song or the figure executed. Is it a coincidence that this four-beat is one of the basic rhythms of Amerind dancing? How did this ancient Atlantic god get into the initiation dance of a supposedly Athapascan tribe?

PERHAPS the answer to this intriguing question is partly answered in the legend of the earth-monster versus Coyote war. And perhaps it is partly answered in the legend of the civilized people who inhabited the country before the arrival of the Navaho. Gladys Reichard in attempting to learn the secrets of Navaho weaving, came across many mentions of this people. The tribe were ever attempting to appease their "ghosts." Were these people a branch of the neighboring Hopi tribe, whom the Navaho has called "Moqui" and explains that it means "dead"? Perhaps these people whom the Navaho exterminated, not without marrying their women, because the Amerind culture probably descended through them, may have actually had the name "Moqui." If they did, then the stockings on the white wife-of-the-god may be explained, for Chan-Chan was located on the Moqui River. Furthermore, the Inca crown might be explained, for the Incas conquered and ruled over Chan-Chan before they wiped out the white city. Or did the Incas inherit the red crown from a previous people—a rival state of Chan-Chan?*

History tells us that the Navaho learned the trade of silversmithing from the Mexicans, who had learned it from their Toltec forbears. However, if the Navaho is connected through his mother's people with Ancient Chan-Chan, then he comes honestly by his ability to shape metals, for the peoples of Chan-Chan were the master metal-smiths of all time. They even did intricate plating, an art we are inclined to think of as modern, and the fact that copper pendants plated with sheet gold were taken from a mound in Georgia suggests trade with Chan-Chan where this type of work reached a supreme peak. Furthermore, this suggests that the Mounds, Chan-Chan and the Arizona colony were all of the same age—which was sometime between the third millennium B.C. when it seems Chan-Chan was founded, until about the fifth century A.D. when the Mounds must have been abandoned.

**The fringe of the hair in front resembling the Incan crown is often worn by the Karibs and carried by them into the interior of Matto Grosso. It is repeated in the Pueblos.—AUTHOR.*

There are many other Pueblo legends telling of the coming of large bands of strangers who carried with them rich clothing upon their persons, much gold and silver jewelry, great emerald gods and chests containing exquisitely iridescent feather-robos. The description would fit the Toltecs except for the idols. Yet there were, in that amazing land of Mexico, many another highly civilized nation that had to flee into the wilderness for their lives, as these people told of doing, and of seeing their magnificent cities being burned to the ground before the forward sweep of an advancing army. Various tribes incorporated these refugees and the Deneas probably had their share.

Of all these Navaho legends which cast such unexpected beams of light upon the dark corridors of the past, none is as fantastically intriguing as that of the "Flying Ship." If this legend had been the product of the imagination of one of the Navaho mechanics who are employed in building "Flying-Fortresses," we could more easily understand its existence. Or if we could even explain it by remembering that these people whose poetic imagination is undoubtedly sharpened by the beauty, vastness and loneliness of their desert reservation, thus storied the modern sight of passing airplanes! Yet such an explanation is impossible. The legend is too ancient for that. Thus it must remain the most intriguing of all Navaho mysteries, for the best account of it is given by Geo. Wharton James who heard it around the turn of the century. Elaborated by my friend the "forger of silver," I give it again.

In the vastness of the sun-burned desert, some hundred miles north of T-Hatchi (Spring-water) and some twenty-five miles from Tz-nabo-zehi Mountain, which the white man calls Carrizo, is a strange rock formation which the Navaho calls Se-Pe-Tai, "The Rock-With-Wings."

Long ago when the sun shined but short shadows upon the earth (inter-glacial period when the northward advance of the sun was actually much higher than at present?) the ancestors of the Navaho crossed a narrow sea far in the Northwest and landed upon the shores of this continent. However, they had no sooner pulled their long-canoes upon the sands, than the natives of the land fell upon them in great numbers. The Navaho had just had a long trip and they did not want to fight, but the natives were determined to exterminate the intruders. The travellers fought back as bravely as they could, but they were hopelessly outnumbered by the overpowering floods of the natives who came from all sides.

AT LAST the wise men of the group decided that the tribe was doomed and they began to shake their rattles and dance the death-song, calling upon the names of their gods to send them help or to see that their spirits made a safe journey to Spirit-land. Then it was that a strange thing happened. Out of the clear blue of the sky a great ship with shining metallic wings came floating down to earth, while the crew of exalted

beings within gestured for the desperate ones to come aboard.

Frantically the harried tribe struggled up the gleaming sides of the silver-mountain, pulling aboard those who were injured and the weak ones, until all were up within the magnificent interior. Then just as the last ones climbed in, the flying-mountain eased from the ground and began to rise into the air.

The natives who had been frozen in their tracks by the awesome sight of the metal bird, now began to run in all directions like an army of ants upon which one blows his breath. In mortal terror they scattered, screaming as they ran, while to those in the ship, the running ones became smaller and smaller until they were no longer to be distinguished from the rocks.

Turning now, the ship headed toward the direction of the sun, and the amazed tribe saw the white teeth of the mountains pass beneath them. For days the Great-Shining-Rock travelled south. The peaks passed and other peaks came, passing in their turn. Then the character of the country changed. Mighty forests, like the deep plush of carpets, flowed by, veined here and there with the silver ribbons of rivers, and this in turn gave place to the paler green of rolling plains. Many times the little band had thought that they would like to settle in that forest or upon those meadows where the hunting must be good, but always the great ones who owned the ship had shaken their heads in denial.

Now the ship came to a mighty earth-trevas and the tribe stared down in wonder and fear. To one another they named it "The Great Divide," and today it is to the white man who comes to gaze upon it, still a sight of wonder and fear—The Grand Canyon. However, they had no sooner crossed the magnificent spectacle of mock pyramids and great earth-temples, than the ship began to come down. Into the purple distances of the desert which frame a land of lonely, sun-scarred

beauty, the ship settled. The Navaho were at first a trifle disappointed. It did not seem to them to be as good a land as many they had passed. But their wise men counselled them to be content and show gratitude to the Great Ones.

Beside the Shining Ship they built their fires that night and went to sleep, but lo! when they awoke in the morning, the great ship was gone. In disappointment and sorrow, they looked around them, until their leaders pointed a finger of awe out upon the desert. There stood a mountain which had not been seen the night before. It was the Ship-With-Wings turned to stone! The Great Ones had left it as a reminder that the Navaho were to forever stay here in the shimmering desert.

No white man may today climb this sacred mountain upon the fear of his life. This will continue to be true while one Navaho believes in the story of the ancient legend of the Ship-With-Wings which the white men call "Ship-Rock," and the Navaho call—"Se-Pe-Tai."

Perhaps when Dr. Letherman or any other scientist turns in such a report as his about an Indian tribe, or possible any other people, he is only formally acknowledging complete failure at establishing contact. Nevertheless, we who love the beauty and interest of Indian lore, as well as those who appreciate beautiful things, can be grateful that one scientist was not able to leave as an epitaph over an extinct Indian Tribe the casual statement—"completely without imagination," and designate them as The Navaho.

REFERENCES

Particular credit is due to Natak of the Navaho, friend of the author, who has searched for the author among the old people of his tribe for the best versions of these legends. His name is being used with his own permission.

Glady's Reichard: Spider Woman.

Washington Matthews: Navaho Legends.

Dr. Joseph Letherman: Smithsonian Report on Navaho 1855.

★ EGYPTIANS STEAL FIRST ON TROJAN HORSE ★

ALL of us have heard the wondrous tale of how the ancient Greeks surprised Troy and reclaimed the beautiful Queen Helen with the use of the Trojan Horse. Since this form of strategy was invented, history gives countless reports of how other battles were won by "Trojan horses."

From the Field Museum comes the startling report, that some three hundred years before the original Trojan horse won the day for the Greeks, the Egyptians had already discovered the method. The amazing report tells that about 1500 B.C. a war was being fought between the Egyptians and the Prince of Jappa (Jaffa). The Egyptian forces had suffered defeat, and the victory seemed destined to go to the Prince. The wily Thuliy, the Egyptian general, summoned a peace conference

with the enemy chief. There, he put the prince to sleep with powerful drugs, and then clubbed him senseless.

Shortly afterward, a long procession wound its way to the prince's camp. The leader explained that he came bearing gifts from Thuliy to the prince's wife. He brought news of the Egyptian's surrender and said that the sacks contained the booty of the victor. The princess, unsuspecting, ordered the gates opened to the procession of 500 soldiers carrying sacks. Once inside, the soldiers quickly slit open the sacks and out hopped 200 more soldiers, providing a force strong enough to take the city.

How often what we think is new today has existed in the remote reaches of the arms of history.

—Henry Viertelmaier

WHAT MAN

CURE FOR INFANTILE PARALYSIS?

MY GRANDMOTHER was a practical nurse and was very much interested in Infantile Paralysis. About the year 1916, a neighbor's five-year-old daughter got the disease, was paralyzed in both legs and was cured. My grandmother watched this child during the weeks of her illness and figured that this child cured herself by chance, while at play in her own backyard.

This child's mother left the family, and the father had to take care of his children himself. He was very unfriendly and would not let the neighbors come near the place. When his daughter came down with the dreaded disease, no one dared come near the place.

After the little girl's illness, she was left paralyzed in both legs. Every morning, left by herself, she would pull herself outside on the ground, which was covered with dried manure; her father kept his horses in the yard. The little girl would play in this dried manure as if it were sand, heaping it up on her legs and dragging herself over the dirty stuff all day long. My grandmother felt very sorry for this child, but could not help her out because of her mean father, so she secretly watched her so that no harm would come to her. In a few weeks, to my grandmother's amazement, the girl grew stronger and stronger. Then she was walking and later running. She was completely cured and not a cripple.

My grandmother said she studied why this girl was cured. Never before had she seen a child left a cripple from Infantile Paralysis cured. What cured her? My grandmother came to the conclusion that the sun and dried manure was what cured her. She figured it wasn't the manure, but something that was in it that did it.

Later on—I don't remember when—another incident happened. My grandmother's pet hen had a stroke of some kind of a paralysis that chickens have and was about ready to die. So my grandmother thought she would experiment with her chicken . . . she hurried the hen in dried manure up to the neck, fed her every day. On the third day—my grandmother laughs heartily at this point of the story—out comes the hen from the pile, squawking and shaking her feathers . . . good as new . . . and very mad.

My grandmother's three-year-old grandson came down with Infantile Paralysis and was left paralyzed in both legs. She thought of the little girl next door . . . it was a nasty cure . . . but anything rather than to have the boy a cripple all his life. So they got a pile of manure, dried it, put it in a place that neighbors could not see.



CAN IMAGINE...

If you will imagine it, perhaps someone will be inspired to do it. This department is for your ideas, no matter how "wild" they may seem; who knows, they may be the spur to some man's thinking and thereby change our destiny! Tell us your thoughts.

Then secretly and ashamedly, morning and afternoon, a few hours at a time, buried the boy's legs in the dried manure in the sun. He was successfully cured. He is now about thirty years old, perfect in build. In high school he was a high jumper on the athletic field.

The mother of the boy who was cured is still alive and knows about this cure, but thinks nothing about it. My mother knew that this boy was cured and about the little girl that was cured, but thinks nothing about it. I don't know if the boy knows how he was cured. But he can be contacted, also his mother at any time, in Colton, California. I will furnish the names if you wish. About the little girl next door, I know nothing of her whereabouts, but I believe she can be located by inquiring of the neighbors.

I hope . . . pray . . . that medical science will just try out this cure on whatever animal that can be experimented with by having this disease or best yet try it out on a child and let the child walk again.

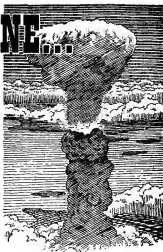
Bernice J. Peterson
1581 Oxford Way
Stockton, California

* * *

SUPERSONICS IN ATOMIC FISSION

THE use of supersonics in actual atomic fission has been scarcely touched upon, yet there is no sensible reason why eventually this method will not supersede and obviate the use of unwieldy cyclotrons, uranium piles, and the dangerous and expensive welter of radioactive material needed for the production of a relatively small amount of fissionable material.

Any tyro knows that a neutron or non-charged particle is used in fission . . . since its no-charge



gives it a better chance to penetrate the outer electron rings of an atom, hit dead center and split the atom, without its speed being slowed by positive or negative reaction with the charged electrons. From a practical standpoint this limits fissionable material to the upper (and rarer) regions of the periodic table, material rich in neutrons for use in both the original nuclear bombardment and in the chain reaction which follows . . . and material relatively unstable . . . which lead, though dense and common, is not.

Briefly, the use of the neutron in fission is to supersonic fission the same as trying to hit a target with a single-shot rifle or a machine-gun.

Out of so many neutrons fired in the ordinary fission process, only so many will hit their nuclear targets. . . the rest will run wild until they lose their initial energy. This is the single-shot rifle, or "fire-at-will" process . . . vastly wasteful of neutrons and energy.

On the other hand, a high-cycle sound wave has tremendous percussive effects, is continuous, can be used to completely blanket a piece of material of any sort, rare or base, and is chary in its original use of energy.

Physicists have long claimed to understand sound . . . but in common with other "exact" scientists, they have a habit of pigeonholing the few bits of data that do not quite seem to fit. They explain the production of sound by saying that a vibrating string, or diaphragm sets adjoining molecules in motion and that these in

turn set other molecules in motion, etc. What they do not explain is whether there is actual physical contact between the individual molecules in this transmitting chain, or whether the vibration is transmitted between one molecule and the next by a form of "inductance" acting across intermolecular space. The last does not seem at all illogical, for the displacement of one molecule carrying a total of the electrical charges of its atoms, should certainly produce some result in a neighboring molecule without physical contact between molecules being necessary. Though the term "ether" is outmoded, there is certain to be some kind of "carrier" material between all charges and groups of charges.

Regardless, there is a definite chain effect produced on molecules and their composing atoms by a sonic vibration . . . which presupposes a carrier substance rather than a mere crude bumping between one molecule and the next. This is born out by the fact that it is now possible with high-cycle sonic apparatus to produce a sound wave smaller in overall dimensions than an electron . . . yet the basic effect of this tiny wave exactly duplicates that of its long, wide, low-cycle brother . . . except that it goes to the heart of the matter and vibrates the electron itself, without giving the great big molecule any shoving around at all . . . it actually strikes in the interstices of the molecule. That is where the destructive ability of high-sonic waves is so pronounced . . . for knocking electrons around is more serious than shoving an entire molecule around . . . and shoving a nucleus around is still more serious.

Picture a completely sound-insulated chamber. Facing into it on all four sides are separate transmitters for tremendously short sonic waves, each transmitter producing exactly the same number of cycles per second. A lump of lead placed in the center of the chamber would be subjected to an inescapable continuous bombardment from four directions simultaneously . . . the four sets of waves converging in a vibrational blast on the lead, actually squeezing and stretching the nucleus several billion times per second. For sound, however small the wave, is a double stroke contraction and rarefaction, one of the most physically destructive forms of vibration on this earth. A sub-

stance which cannot yield is first struck, and then yanked up by the collar to be struck again by the next wave in line . . . and should the nucleus try to give under the pushing and hauling from one side, it finds itself being struck from behind and the other side by duplicate waves timed to deliver their blows simultaneously.

This is actually what would happen to any material subjected to such high-sonic bombardment. It can be seen in lower ranges than the fission range. The longer and wider the individual wave the more territory it includes in its swing . . . which is the reason that the lower notes on the organ in St. Paul's Cathedral cannot be sounded for over a few seconds at a time. In this case the waves are so long and wide that they produce a pendulum effect in the building itself, swinging not just an atom or a molecule but an entire mass of cohesive molecules.

The use of sonic short-wave in fission is entirely practical . . . it awaits the development of a logical sonic-transmitter, controllable in range, and free from the physical limitations of a conventional diaphragm or the inflexibility of a vibrating crystal.

I treasure in my possession a few lines from one of the foremost high-sonic pioneers in the world. Since I am not authorized to use his name, I will merely quote what he replied to a letter I sent him, asking if fission by a sonic wave was possible.

"Atomic fission is entirely possible by this means, if you can produce a sound wave whose impact approximates the speed of light."

I do not believe that he thinks it is possible to produce a sound-wave of such a tremendous cyclical rate . . . but the interesting thing is that he grants the original premise, and with luck I hope to prove to him that a cycle rate can be nearly unlimited . . . when dealing with a tangible wave such as sound.

Certainly sonic fission would knock every theory of international control into a cocked hat . . . render now priceless sources of fissionable material valueless and nominally put the means of destruction into the hands of every nit-wit that can put a radio set together. I should leave it alone, but it is far too fascinating.



THE SHAVER MYSTERY



SAYS Mr. Shaver in his stories: "End (an abbreviation for 'ex-disintegration') is the condensation back into the form of matter, of matter which has been disintegrated (sums are constantly disintegrating), and this in-flow of condensing matter is what causes gravity, which is a push, and not a pull as the modern scientist says."

Gesenius compiled a lexicon of Hebrew-Chaldee words more than a hundred years ago, and be-

translates the Chaldean word, which appears in the second chapter of Genesis as *mlst*, as *pressure of gravity*. The Chaldean word is *ed*.

In Shaver's ancient language of the caves, it is used as *end*. End fills all space in finely divided form as a "mist." In the proximity of matter it condenses and falls toward that matter causing the pressure we know as gravity.

Draw your own conclusions.

—The Editors



INSIDE MOUNT LASSEN



By RALPH B. FIELDS

**The writer of this article presents it as a fact story;
the editors present it as received. It is amazing!**

IN BEGINNING this narrative and the unexplainable events that befall my friend and myself, I offer no explanation, nor do I even profess to offer any reason. In fact, I have yet to find a clue that will, even in part, offer any explanation whatever. Yet as it did happen, there must be some rhyme or reason to the whole thing. It may be that some one can offer some helpful information to a problem that just should not exist in these times of enlightenment.

To begin with, if we had not been reading an article in a magazine telling us about the great value of guano (bat droppings in old caves) that have accumulated over great numbers of years, we would have continued to wend our merry way through life without ever having a thing to worry about.

But having read the article and as we were at the time living near a small town called Mantien in Tehama County, California, we thought that that would be a good country to explore for a possible find of this kind. After talking it over for some time and as we had plenty of time just then, we decided to take a little trip up the country just back of us. As we were almost at the foot of Mount Lassen that seemed the best place to conduct our little prospecting tour.

So collecting a light camping outfit, together with a couple of pup tents to sleep in, we started out on what we expected to be a three- or four-day jaunt up the mountain.

I guess we covered about ten or twelve miles on the third day and it was fast approaching time to begin to look for a place to spend the night and the thought was not very amusing as it had turned a little colder and we were well over seven thousand feet above sea level.

We soon found a sheltered place beneath a large outcrop of rock and set about making a camp. As I was always the cook and Joe the chore boy, I began getting things ready to fix us some grub and Joe began digging around for some dead scrub brush to burn. I had things all ready and looked around for Joe and his firewood. But I could see no sign of him. I began calling to him and he soon came into sight from around the very rock where we were making our camp. And I knew he was laboring under some great excitement as his face was lit up like a Christmas tree.

He had found a cave. The entrance was on the other side of that very rock. He was all for exploration right away. But I argued that we had better wait till morning. But he argued that in the cave it was always night and we would

have to use flashlights anyway so what would be the difference? Well, we finally decided that we would give it at least a once-over after we had had a bite to eat.

It wasn't much to call a cave at first as it had a very small entrance, but back about twenty feet it widened out to about ten feet wide and around eight feet high. And it did reach back a considerable distance as we could see at least a hundred yards and it appeared to bend off to the left. The floor sloped slightly down.

We followed to the bend and again we could see a long way ahead and down.

At this point we became a little afraid as we were some way into the mountain. The idea of being inside so far seemed to make us a little afraid. But we reasoned that inasmuch as there were no branches or connecting caves we could not get lost and therefore had nothing to be afraid of. So we went on.

We found no sign of anything that we could imagine to be our much sought guano nor signs of any animals being inside the cave.

I don't know how far we went, but it must have been a mile or two, as we kept on walking and the cave never changed its contour or size. Noticing this I mentioned it to Joe. We stopped to examine closer by the light of our larger flashlights. And we discovered an amazing thing. The floor seemed to be worn smooth as though it had been used for a long time as a path or road. The walls and ceiling of the cave seemed to be cut like a tunnel. It was solid rock and we knew that no one would cut a tunnel there out of rock as there had been no sign of mining operations. And the rock in the walls and ceiling was run together like it had been melted. Or fused from a great heat.

While we were busy examining the cave in general, Joe swore he saw a light way down in the cave. We started down the cave once more and found a light. Or I should say the light found us as it was suddenly flashed into our faces. We stood there blinded by it for a minute until I flashed my light at its source and saw we were confronted by three men.

These men looked to be about fifty or a little younger. They were dressed in ordinary clothes such as is worn by most working men in that locality. Levi type pants and flannel shirts and wool coats. They wore no hats. But their shoes looked strange as the soles were so thick they gave the impression of being made of wood.

We just stood there for a minute or two and looked at them. We had no idea there was any-

body within miles of us and there stood three men looking at us in a cave a mile or so in the depths of old Mount Lassen.

I was scared. We were unarmed. And we knew nothing about these men. One of them spoke to us. He asked us what we were looking for. I told him, but I could see he didn't believe it. We both tried to convince him, but he just smiled. We had a little argument with him, but fearing they might be some criminal gang in hiding, we came to the conclusion that we had better retreat. Turning to go we were confronted by two more of them.

I can't find any way to express the fear and utter helplessness I felt in finding our retreat cut off. I do remember having remarked to Joe,

"Well, it looks like we are behind the well known eight-ball." I sure didn't feel as jovial as I spoke either. One of the strangers told us,

"I think maybe you had both better come with us."

We were in no position to argue, though we both would have liked to do a little of that right there, but we had no way of enforcing our arguments. Where could a hero gain any credit in a place like that? So we permitted the five to escort us deeper into the depths of old Lassen.

THEY led us farther down and I guess we had gone a couple more miles when we came to the first thing that really amazed us.

We came to a place where the cavern widened out a little and we saw some kind of a machine, if it can be called that. Though I had no chance to examine it closely at the time, I did later and it was a very strange contrivance. It had a very flat bottom, but the front was curved upward something like a toboggan. The bottom plate was about eight inches thick and it was the color of pure copper. But it was very hard tempered. Although I have had a lot of experience with metals and alloys, I had no opportunity to examine it closely enough to determine just what it was, I doubt very much if I could. It had a seat in the front directly behind a heavy dashboard affair and there was a dial shaped in a semi-circle with figures or markings on it. I had not the slightest idea what they stood for, but they were very simple to remember. (See cut.) If there was a motor, it was in the rear. All I could see was two horse shoe or magnet-shaped objects that faced each other with the round parts to the outside. When this thing was in operation, a brilliant green arc seemed to leap between the two and to continue to glow as long as it was in operation. The only sound it gave off was a hum or buzz that sounded like a battery charger in operation.

The seat in the front was very wide. The only method of operation was a black tear-shaped object which hung from the panel by a chain. One of these men sitting in the middle, took this thing and touched the sharp end to the first figure on the left side of the dial.



Markings on dial (from memory)

When he touched the first figure, the contraption seemed to move almost out from under us. But it was the smoothest and quietest take-off I ever experienced. We seemed to float. Not the slightest sound or vibration. And after we had traveled for a minute he touched the next figure on the dial and our speed increased at an alarming rate. But when he had advanced the black object over past the center of the dial, our speed increased until I could hardly breathe. I can't begin to estimate the distance we had traveled or our speed, but it was terrific. The two horseshoe objects in the rear created a green light that somehow shone far ahead of us, lighting up the cavern for a long way. I soon noticed a black line running down the center of the cavern and our inner-mountain taxi seemed to follow that.

I don't know how long we continued our mad ride, but it was long enough for us to become used to the terrific speed and we had just about overcome our fear of some kind of a wreck when we were thrown into another spasm of fear.

Another machine of the same type was approaching us head on. I could see that our captors were very nervous, but our speed continued. As the other machine became closer our speed slowed down very fast and we came to a smooth stop about two feet from the front of the other machine.

Our machine had no sooner stopped than our captors leaped from the machine and started to dash away. A fine blue light leaped from the other machine in a fine pencil beam and its sweep caught them and they fell to the floor of the cavern and lay still.

THE figures dismounted from the other machine and came close to us. Then I noticed that they carried a strange object in their hands. It resembled a fountain pen flashlight with a large, round, bulb-like affair on the back end and a grip something like a German luger. They pointed them at us.

After seeing what had happened to our erstwhile captors I thought that our turn was next, whatever it was. But one spoke to us.

"Are you surface people?"

"I guess we are, as that is where we came from very recently."

"Where did the horloks find you?"

"If you mean those guys there," I pointed to

the five motionless figures, "back there a few hundred miles." I pointed toward the way we had come in our wild ride.

"You are very fortunate that we came this way," he told us. "You would have also become horloks and then we would have had to kill you also." That was the first time that I had realized that the others were dead.

They put their strange weapons away and seemed friendly enough, so I ventured to ask him the who and why of everything we had run into. I told him of our search for guano and how we had encountered the five horloks, as he called them. And also asked him about the machines and their operation and could we get out again? He smiled and told us.

"I could not tell you too much as you could not understand. There are so many things to explain and you could not grasp enough of what I could myself tell you. The people on the surface are not ready to have the things that the ancients have left. Neither I nor any one in any of the caverns know why these things work, but we do know how to operate some of them. However, there are a great many evil people here who create many unpleasant things for both us and the surface people. They are safe because no one on the surface believes us or them. That is why I am telling you this. No one would believe that we exist. We would not care, but there are many things here that the outer world must not have until they are ready to receive them, as they would completely destroy themselves, so we must be sure that they do not find them. As for the machine, I don't know how it works. But I know some of the principles of it. It works simply by gravity. And it is capable of reverse. The bottom plate of it always is raised about four inches from the surface of the floor. That is why there is no friction and has such a smooth opera-

tion. This object suspended from this chain is pure carbon. It is the key to the entire operation. As I told you before, I cannot explain why it runs, but it does. We want you two to return to where you came and forget about us. We will show you how to operate the sled and we want you never again to enter the cave. If you do and you do not encounter the horloks, we will have to do something about you ourselves, so it would not be advisable to try to return at all events. One thing I can tell you. We never could permit you to leave another time."

He explained to us the operation of the machine and in some way reversed its direction. So thanking them, we seated ourselves in the sled, as he had called it, and were soon on our way back.

Our return trip was really something we enjoyed as I was sure not to advance the carbon far enough on the dial to give us such terrific speed, but we soon found ourselves where we started from. The sled slid to a smooth stop and we jumped out and started up the cave aloft.

We must have walked a long way coming in, for we thought we never would come to the surface. But at last we did. And it was late afternoon when we emerged.

We lost no time in making our way down the mountain and Joe tells me that he isn't even curious about what is in that cave.

But I am. What is the answer to the whole thing? I would like to know. We had been told just enough for me to believe that down there somewhere there were or are things that might baffle the greatest minds of this earth. Sometimes I am tempted to go back into that cave if I could again find it, which I doubt, but, then I know the warning I heard in there might be too true, so I guess I had better be of the same mind as Joe. He says:

"What we don't know don't hurt us"

AMERICA'S MYSTERIOUS RACE OF INDIAN GIANTS

By REV. CHIEF SEQUOYAH

PROBABLY an explanation is necessary for a story dealing with Indian Giants. At least you should have my reasons for writing this.

My motives are purely those of a student, naive enough to believe in giants. I make no claim of being a psychologist, but only as a student who has gathered many wonderful legends as they have been handed down, by word of mouth, for hundreds of generations. These legends and a mass of evidence to support them are from the lips of over one thousand Indians of every tribe in the Pacific northwest, with whom I have had friendly

associations for more than twenty years.

My secondary motive is that of an historian—, and that dignified and bearded individual has ever been classified by the village wag as a fictionist. I write this as a history of a race of giant Indians who lived in the western mountain ranges. I shall set forth, with what frankness and sincerity and those powers of selection of which I am capable, the habits, customs, and life of the American Indian Giants of the Pacific Coast. From the many contacts the Puget Sound Indians have had with them, I will endeavor to give as much infor-

mation as possible regarding the Giants' philosophy, the lethal powers of their minds, and their odd sense of humor. If, after presenting all my evidence that such a tribe existed, the student is convinced, I will be appreciative and happy.

I have read somewhere of the Cyrenatic sect, founded by the youthful Aristotippus in 356 B.C., who promulgated the doctrine of Hedonism. They classified emotional reactions as pleasant, harsh, or mean. The end of pleasant emotion is pleasure; the end of harsh emotion, grief; the end of mean emotion, nothing.

May your reaction to my Indian Giant stories be pleasant. Thank you.—REV. CHAS. SEQUOYAN.

THE very first stories I heard as a boy were those of a mysterious race of Indian Giants which the Indians of the Pacific Coast called the Se-at-kos. Whether sitting before a friendly camp-fire or snugly wrapped in furs on a long canoe voyage up and down the Puget Sound, the story teller would always eventually turn to the colorful Giants who roamed up and down the Olympic peninsula as well as the Rocky Mountain range; who were such swift runners they ran their game down and killed it with their hands; whose strange sex-life moved them to kidnap Indian women into wifely bondage; who understood and could talk fluently the different parent tongues of the Pacific Coast Indians; who knew the art of mass hypnotism beyond the knowledge of any modern hypnotist; whose peculiar Nietzschean philosophy often made them ruthless; who were past masters in the art of ventriloquism; who were psychic and had strange mystical powers and yet had such an original sense of humor that they appeared at times like hoisterous irresponsible children, playing practical jokes upon people and laughing their way through life.

It was from Quay-Chton, a kind, philosophic old Indian steeped in the history of the tribe of the Elewahs, that I learned much about Giant lore. For ten years he was my teacher. His name, it was said, came directly from the first stock of the Quiches of Central America. Quay-Chton was the chief priest of the famed Indian mystery school called the Hun-hanneets. My parents referred to him as my grandfather but he was not. He was a close relative of my father all right but such is the maze of relationship among my race which has married and intermarried for ten or more centuries that one gets confused and lost in genealogy.

I know that I have over two thousand relatives among the Puget Sound tribes. Yes, I have them among the Eskimos at Point Barrow. A grand uncle of mine was captured by Eskimos, taken north, and lived among them. He made an igloo, married and had five children and was with them for ten years. He finally became lonely for his own country and ran away, walking from the Arctic to the Puget Sound. I have relatives among the Alaska Indians, among the Hadidas, the Cowichans and on down south to the early Mayans

and Quiches from whence my tribe migrated many thousands of years ago.

But, why stop there? All Indians are my relatives. All men are my brothers. Yes, the Water-people, the Bird-people and the four-legged people of the forest and plains are my little brothers. I was taught to call them so by a medicine man in my younger days. Since Giant men for generations have taken the daughters of men to wife, I have thousands of august relatives in Giant Land.

Relationship is a favorite word with the red race since they believe all matter, all spirit, all life comes from one source. The only difference is that the spirit of life in its cycles of re-incarnation, comes clothed in different forms like the Bird-people, the Forest-people, the Plant-people or the towering-Tree-people. But all are relatives for do we not come from the One Great Father above? And do we not all feed from one Mother which is Earth? Therefore, atoms and mastodons, Giants of sand and mountains, humming birds and eagles, grass and trees, raindrops and oceans, pigmies and Giants, apes and men, are all relatives to the red man.

Quay-Chton in his old age became my companion and teacher. We fished at Seabeck and hunted in the Olympic wilderness. It was while on these trips that he rounded out my education in Giant lore. He told me about their customs, habits, knowledge of hypnotism and ventriloquism, and their mystical chants. These chants were understood by the ancient priest of the Indian Mystery School as interpreting the four cycles of the red people on this continent. The first cycle was the Age of Earth, when the first Red people were destroyed by famine. After an interval of thousands of years, followed the Age of the Wind, when the human race was destroyed by cyclones, tornadoes and terrific winds that swept up and down the face of the earth. Then came the Age of Fire when the whole of America was consumed in conflagration and the last Age which was the great flood.

OCCASIONALLY, the Puget Sound Indians heard strange, soul stirring songs just before winter set in, as the Giants mobilized in the Olympic Range and started their long march to the south. I have gathered from Indian mystics who heard their songs, that it sounded like the rhythmic rumblings of muffled thunder symbolically attuned to sidereal harmonics, to the cosmic chant of the stars, to the music of spheres, to the crashing of systems in the four great cycles of Man, to the querulous chirp of the hungry people in the dead ashes of time, to the cool tumult of elemental conflicts as cyclonic winds went questing in the darkened void for atoms and Man, to the flaming up of America in the primeval darkness of the fire age, to the onset of tidal waves crashing over the hum of gnats, the trumpeting of mastodons, the barking of dogs, the coughing of lions, the melody of the thrush, the bull-roar of Giants and the wailing voice of man.

Puget Sound Indians say there is nothing like it in the songs of man, if song it could be called. The last conceivable note has found expression in so perfect a sound as to make a hard bitten warrior's head swim with delight, put passionate tears into his eyes and send chills creeping up and down his back. A great uncle of mine who was widely known for his great strength and courage, told me that he felt a wilting sensation upon seeing a Giant man on an emotional rampage in the primeval wilderness of the northwest. It was a night of clear starlight and below, stretching away remotely, was Sequim Prairie. My uncle hastily climbed a large cedar tree as he heard the impotent grief and sobbing sounds of a Giant song ringing through the woods. Quivering with an excess of power, the Giant came into sight, butting with powerful shoulders young trees to the left and right as he marched with long strides. Through the thick forest he came, grunting and quivering as he half-sang and half-declained with amazingly forceful expression. Embracing a tree, the Giant lowered his voice and swaying to and fro, he sobbed and moaned as though emotionally spent. There was silence except for the distant throbbing of a tom-tom. But during the next few minutes my uncle was terrified for another song poured from the Giant's throat in a seething flood so powerful that everything around him was singing, sobbing and shaking in torment of grief. That Giant song seemed to fill the forest with great unrest and strange desires, with a vague, sweet gladness, a wild yearning and stirring for something, he knew not what. The air was electric with the Giant's magnetism and everything seemed to rock to the vibration of his earth-shaking voice. He was now singing without words, with sounds alone. The heavenly bodies seemed to join in a cosmic chant as they moved in a stately procession across the sky and through it all, unceasing and faint, came the pulsing sounds of an Indian Priest's drum—rhythmic as life itself—flowing—ebbing—rising and falling with the mystic chant of the Se-at-ko. Just before the Giant disappeared, he walked to the center of a moon drenched clearing and lifted his arms out, poured forth a chant of farewell and then vanished into the wilderness from whence he came.

As a boy in an Indian fishing village on Hood Canal, I often gazed with awe at the Giant's haunts, the Olympic Mountains, and visioned that magnificent breed of men literally marching on the tops of the range, going south and keeping step to the bull-roar of a marching song. Giants—Giants—Giants, keepers of the mysteries of divine knowledge, ageless and timeless, eternal. They thronged my childhood dreams. They dominated my boyhood days and as a student, I weigh and measure. Christ, Quetzalcoatl, Abraham Lincoln, Neko-My, Einstein, Manly P. Hall, Hlawatha, Gregory Mason, Black Elk, Edison, and a host of others who, if not Giants of stature, are or were intellectual Giants as they balance the scale and measure up to Giant standards.

STATISTICS tell us that Giants in other lands ranged from seven to ten feet tall. In the time of Augustus, there were to be seen in the Horti Sallustiani at Rome, the bodies of a Giant and a giantess secundilla, each ten feet, three inches tall. In the reign of Claudius, an Arabian named Gahbaras was nine feet, four inches high and was exhibited in Rome. Emperor Maximian, a Thracian, was nine feet tall. A Jewish Giant, Eleazar, mentioned by Josephus, was ten feet high. Long Moors, an Irish Giant of the time of Edward III was six feet ten and one half inches tall. Queen Elizabeth's Flemish porter was seven feet six inches. J. Middleton, or the child of Hale, born in 1578, attained the height of nine feet, three inches. C. Munster, a yeoman of the guard in Hanover, who died in 1676, was eight feet, six inches tall. Cajanus, a Swedish Giant exhibited in London in 1742, was nine feet high. C. Byrre, who died in 1783, was eight feet, four inches tall. Patrick Cotter O'Brien, a native Kinsale, who lived in the seventeenth century was eight feet, seven and three fourths inches tall. Pauline Wedde (called Marian), a German Giantess, who died in 1884 at the age of eighteen, was eight feet, two inches tall. Josef Winkelmaier, an Austrian, was eight feet, nine inches tall. Chang-Wu-Gon, the Chinese Giant, was seven feet, nine inches tall. Fider Machow, a Russian, was seven feet, nine inches tall.

Among the Giants of today, we find that Mylirinne, a Finn, is eight feet, five inches tall. Mr. Jack Earle, an American, is eight feet, three inches tall. Robert Wadlow the boy Giant of Alton, Illinois, was eight feet, seven inches tall.

Among the circus Giants of modern times is Griselida, a girl from Budapest, who is seven feet tall and still growing. Mr. Crema is eight feet high. Henry Mullins, who was married not long ago at Springfield, Missouri, is seven feet, nine inches tall.

The Quimaulls, the Callams, the Elewahs, the Goyallups, the Tulalips, the Lummis, the Haldas and the Cowichans have seen the mysterious tribe of the Giant Se-at-ko and agree that they were from eight to ten feet tall. They were a proud race of full-statured heavy-thewed men, broad-shouldered, deep-chested and could roar to the hurt of ear drums. The hair on their enormous heads was straight, coarse and black. Their skin was reddish brown of about the same shade as the Indian. Though they weighed three to four hundred pounds, they were so well proportioned, their weight did not handicap them in traveling through the wilderness.

The Indians describe their strength as excessive and overwhelming. This strength seemed to pervade every slight movement of their massive bodies as though it were a clear cut advertisement of a greater and a deeper strength that lurked down somewhere in the depths of their being. Like the average race, some were handsome and some were not. Their clothing during the summer was the usual hip-cloth. Since they migrated to the

south every fall, it is to be presumed they wore hip cloths the year around except for their gala occasions when they would hold their reviews and grand parades in full dress at their winter homes.

NOW science, in its study of modern Giants, claims that giantism signifies a glandular disharmony. To quote them, "it is all too evident that the vast majority of these tallest men and women are suffering from an obscure disturbance of the glands which produce a disharmony of the bony structure and also causes various functional disorders." Generally the Giant shows obvious signs of what the pathologists call *acromegaly*, abnormal growth of the bones and tissues. We do not know just what causes this growth. It seems usually associated with disturbances of one of the ductless glands, the pituitary, which has some direct connection with the growth of the bones and tissues.

The Indians who have seen both the Se-at-kos and the circus giants readily agree that the circus Giants may be troubled from disharmony of the bone structure and other functional disorders. The Se-at-kos, however, had a common characteristic which all Indians who have seen them agree upon. It was their ability to run down the swift deer and kill it without weapons and their like gracefulness. It is said that they traveled from Mexico, Arizona and California to the state of Washington, on foot in a week's time. This does not seem unusual, for the Se-at-kos, when they travel, cover over one hundred miles a day. Still more, it is said they could outrun the Tarahumare Indians of Sonora, who are considered by white and Indian historians alike as the finest runners

of all the Indian tribes in South or North America. The Tarahumares, according to the report of the American Bureau of Ethnology, are able to outrun any horse in a sufficiently long race and they too, can easily cover one hundred miles per day.

Certainly persons with functional disorders cannot be swift runners nor capable of much endurance. Furthermore, the Se-at-kos seem to have been able to produce their kind from the Giant Xelbus of the pre-war flood era down to the present age. At times, they probably experienced a shortage of women and were forced to kidnap Puget Sound Girls.

Unlike the circus Giants, their teachers have preserved their art of developing the power of will, their understanding of the occult, their knowledge of hypnotism and ventriloquism, as Mountain Crow, Knuckle Bone, Broken Paddle and many others of my people of the Puget Sound Tribes will testify.

Knuckle Bone and Running Horse were unwilling actors in the role they played with the Giant ventriloquists Crooked Neck, a pompous and dignified Indian, danced an airy butterfly dance when under the hypnotic power of a Giant's mind. Sacha, an Indian maid, saw a practical demonstration of the lethal power of their minds, which should prove that the Giant Se-at-kos were a normal, intelligent and healthy race of big men. (Details of these stories forbidden. They are "medicine man" secrets.)

The Puget Sound Indians are not the only tribe that have seen and talked with the mysterious race of Indian Giants. The Okanagan, the Iroquois, the Cocur D'Aleenes, the Kallispels, the Pend Oreilles, the Nez Perce, and the Cherokees tell of them in song and legend.



TRAPPED SUNSHINE



THE young French engineer, Pierre Arthuys, closed the door of his gloomy Paris flat behind him, shutting out the light. Even with the blinds up, the rooms were wrapped in darkness, and artificial light had to be substituted for the warm rays of the afternoon sun. He wondered how many people lived in this state of perpetual darkness in otherwise comfortable homes. His agile mind played with the idea of creating some mechanical means of trapping the sunlight.

A few days later, Arthuys found himself in an airplane flying over his city. Beneath him, the roofs of Paris were bathed in sunlight. It came to him that perhaps the sun rays could be trapped and reflected by mirrors into otherwise dark buildings. Within an incredibly short time the instruments for effecting this miracle were being tested. Finally, this French engineer succeeded in creating a device that actually puts sunlight on tap, making it possible to flood basements, subway stations and even mine shafts with natural light.

The Arthel Heliostat consists of a large motor-

driven mirror which, mounted on the roof, follows the sun and reflects its rays to a fixed mirror placed above it and facing downward over a shaft. The directed rays, forming a powerful beam are then reflected by smaller mirrors from room to room through small apertures near the ceilings. The main beam has a strength of 32,000 candle power, sufficient to light a whole block of flats or offices. The motors are self-starting and thermostatically controlled.

In the few years since the invention of the heliostat, many unique uses have been found for it. At the Central Post Office in Amsterdam, Holland, the sectors of mail have their own special sunbeams which they can regulate as they wish. Since there is no heat in the rays of the heliostat, the people in southern latitudes find the system especially helpful. They can keep their blinds drawn against the sun and yet have daylight in all rooms.

Through dark channels the light of day now finds its way to thousands of people to whom daytime was only a word—and it's all done with mirrors!

—June Lurie.

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DISCUSSIONS



AMAZING STORIES will publish in each issue a selection of letters from readers. Everybody is welcome to contribute. Bouquets and brickbats will have an equal chance. Inter-reader correspondence and controversy will be encouraged through this department. Get in with the gang and have your say.

CAVERN NEAR PITTSBURGH

Sirs:

I have been a reader of AMAZING STORIES for a very long time, and have been even more interested in your magazine since Mr. Shaver has begun his contributions on caves. At present I am a patient (surgical) in Augustana Hospital, but will be discharged in a few days, so any communication will reach me at my home address. I too, know of one of these entrances into the world below. It is about fifty miles south of Pittsburgh, Pa., in the first range of the Allegheny Mountains. My experiment with the caves have been only partial explorations, consisting of travelling about a mile and a quarter down into the cave itself, and returning. The cave is ventilated from below, and stays at a constant 50° no matter what the outside temperature may be. It is a series of rooms or galleries with narrow passages from one to another in about the sixth room down, there is a large tree trunk which could not have come from the surface above as the stratosphere is almost completely free from local fault; and it could never have come down through the openings in the cave itself as they were small at the top, and kept getting progressively larger as they got deeper.

I traveled down as long as I could find comparatively easy travel—about a 45° descent all the way—and finally came to what I thought must be the end of the cave, for I could see no more openings into rooms, but on closer examination found instead a bore, about six feet across, straight down into solid rock. I turned my flash downward and could see that it must have gone straight down for at least a hundred feet, the sides were perfectly smooth, and the shaft, or bore, in a perfect round—no apparent irregularities anywhere—I had no way of descending any further, so I returned my steps back up through the different rooms to the top of the mountain where the cave opens to this world. I made discreet inquiries of several old timers in that region, and found that in 1915, or about that year, six survivors took gear and equipment, and spent a month in exploration of the cave, going 18 miles from the entrance, and down almost five miles below sea level. I have never gone back, but hope to some day in the future, with escort, equipment, and supplies. I'd certainly love to see

the machine that made that bore! If you have any information on other caves in that area, let me know—they too may tie in with this one, though if they do, their connections are very deep. Also, if you can, please describe the equipment that made that vertical shaft. Oh, yes, one more interesting item—the surveyors in their exploration of the cave, distinctly heard the rumble of machinery—but their calculations proved they were nowhere near a large city, (surface) and they were too deep for surface noises otherwise.

What's the answer?

George A. LeHew
1918 W. Newport Ave.
Chicago 13, Illinois

How about this cave? Anybody else know anything about it? Can we confirm this? If there is any record of this exploration which can be made available, we will publish full details. If the Speleological Society (those cavehunters, that is) know of this, or are willing to explore it, we invite their cooperation. How about it, Miss Betty Yoe of Cleveland. Want to pass this on to one of your "grottoes"? Any of our readers near Pittsburgh who are interested might do well to contact the local group of the society and help us to check this.—En.

ACTION FOR MRS. ROGERS!

Sirs:

You caught me by surprise when you published the letter I sent you, re the Neph. Somehow, I feel as though you were not a skeptic, that I can talk to you as I would to a friend. I have always stood more or less in awe of editors, but I believe I can tell you how astounded I was when I received a letter on the tenth of July. I am a member of the Auxiliary Number 2, Spanish Americans War Veterans. That morning I was on the point of leaving my house to attend the meeting when the postman came, bringing me five letters from California, Maine, Oklahoma, Boston and Utah. I was fairly sure I knew no one in those states and that city. I opened the first one and was struck speechless by the eulogies contained therein. My letter struck a responsive chord, and so on and so on. I immediately made tracks for the nearest book shop and bought the copy of AMAZING STORIES (I had no idea the magazine had come out yet). Well, since then I have

(Continued on page 164)

IF YOU MUST GAMBLE

A few months ago, a book was submitted to us for publication. Since the subject was out of our field, we were about to turn it down when we became intrigued with the very first few pages. The more we read, the more fascinated we became.

Before we knew it, we were sending the manuscript around for expert opinions. Immediately the excitement started. "Where has Lenihan been all my life?" "Lenihan's 'bet insurance' ideas are the shrewdest horse-sense on racing I have ever run across." "Lenihan's rules are eye-openers!" "Look here, you've got to publish this book. You'll be doing millions of men and women a favor."

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(A quick glance at the Contents)

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Why people with "foresight" in one hand don't have money in the other—How tips trap you—Why it's foolish to bet your brains out over "scratch sheets", past performances and other lucky traps—Picking the "right" tracks—Temperamental horses—Why even the No. 1 jockeys are losing gamblers.

Taking your cut from the insurance companies—Taking the right way to make averages work over—What you don't most of the gamblers out of a bet—What you don't know CAN hurt you—LENIHAN'S "INSURED" METHOD—The \$25 bet plan—How the public turned \$25 into substantial capital—Why "Place" and "Show" lead gamblers—How "saps" defeat themselves.

Watching your winnings "on paper"—The chart that tells all—Only suckers try for "bellies"—The facts about "long shots".

Dice

How to size up a dice game—Agreeing on rules beforehand—The stakes to set—How averages work in dice games.

Roulette

"No, no, a thousand times no!"—Do's and don'ts that guarantee losses—The only time you can win—Don't bank on kind croppers.

Winning at Contract Bridge

How to Be on the Right Side 9 Times Out of 10!

How the Wehrheim Method came to be discovered—A full year's analysis and what it showed—Why the Wehrheim Method gives 100% corrections—Rules that work 9 times out of 10—The method at a glance: Stock Trick Table; Probable Stock Value of a Hand in a Suit Bid; Bidding Recommendations for Original Suit Bid; Combined Value of the Hand; Defensive No Trump High; No Trump Tabulations; Defensive Bidding; Leads and Plays—How to have fun at Contract Bridge and still keep your friends.

Poker

The safe way to outsmart professionals—Rules for stake setting and winning time—Mysterious new counters and "Stance Traps"—6 rules that keep losers away—Don't force cards, they are slaves of habit—How averages work in poker—Why the "con" gambler's player has a rotten time.

Rummy

Heed these warnings and save your money—"You can't go wrong taking a profit"—Watch those just sure cards—How to play averages in rummy—What about the States?

Stock Market

What newcomers to the market should know—The vs. Somland & Pao—The coming boom and what to do—Take your profit and run—1,000 special items out of 3,000 stocks—Putting all your eggs one basket—Recipe for success in the market.

Maurice Lenihan has spent a lot of money satisfying the urge to "take a chance". Like millions of others, he has taken expensive "flies" on "tips" and hunches, and studied scratch sheets and past performances until he was blue in the face.

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DISCUSSIONS

AMAZING STORIES will publish in each issue a selection of letters from readers. Everybody is welcome to contribute. Brevity and brevity will have an equal chance. Best reader correspondence and controversy will be encouraged through this department. Get in with the gang and have your say.



(Continued from page 162)

become a very popular woman. I have, to date, received no less than 120 letters, six wires. Every state in the union has at least one person and sometimes more who have written me. I have letters from Vancouver, B. C., Hawaii, Puerto Rico. Callers have beaten a path to my house, coming, some of them, from as far away as six hundred miles. All of them wanted to know the same thing, where and how could they get to the caves? To one and all I said the same thing, too. I could not, had not, the time to tell them anything. If they wanted to read the story, I would

write it, then if they wanted to read it and you published it, that way, and that way only could I tell it. Believe it or not, a well-dressed man came to me the other day and with an air of secrecy, informed me that he would get up an expedition to explore the caves. Also, that he would give me \$1000 for a map and a share in whatever he and his associates found there. All this just for a map. When I informed him that poor as I was I could not do that, he offered me more. I said, I am under oath and I would lead no treasure seekers to the caves. He threatened me very nicely. Very well, but if I ever gave to anyone else the location of said caves, I wouldn't need to wait until I was sixty years of age to go back there. Phew, I should have been scared, I guess, but it takes more than that to scare me. Thank Tamil. I am now writing the story. I make no apologies for the composition, I can only tell the simple truth and trust to luck and you to help me vindicate my friends. Cusaya if Tamil.

Margaret Rogers
117 Devine St.
San Antonio, Texas

This letter from Mrs. Rogers is extremely interesting. She certainly got a lot of response. We now have her manuscript, and we expect to present it to you with our January issue. We find it absorbingly interesting, and along with others who have interviewed Mrs. Rogers and then written us saying they feel she is telling the truth, we believe her experience really happened to her, and we leave it to you to decide for yourself what it means. This letter, along with others (and manuscripts . . . see "Inside Mount Lassen" in this issue) seem to offer corroboration to Mr. Shaver. It would seem that we are getting closer to the "facts" we want ultimately to publish regarding the Shaver Mystery.

A SCIENCE EDITOR READS US

Sirs:

On the strength of the reviews that I read, I bought recently a copy of the "Book of Science Fiction" which is made up largely of stories which have appeared in "Amazing Stories." I was struck by the remarkable quality of the tales and blushed for myself that I had not paid much attention to the magazine in the past. Apparently some excellent fiction is written on science themes by men whose names ought to be better known to the public than they are. So I have become a convert to your magazine, certain that, though I may raise my skeptical eyebrows now and then as I read it, I shall derive much pleasure and many a thrill from its pages.

Waldemar Kaempffert,
Science Editor,
The New York Times,
Times Square, N. Y.

Welcome to the fold, Mr. Kaempffert. We are glad to see that you agree that science fiction as it appears in *Amazing Stories* is worthy of more attention than it gets. We are proud to realize that interest is being aroused.



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PATENT PROTECTION

The U. S. Patent Office recommends "an applicant is advised, unless familiar with such matters, to employ a competent registered Patent Attorney . . . as the value of patents depends largely upon the skillful prosecution of the specifications and claims." Steps to be taken in obtaining patent protection available upon request.

Marlin M. Evans
REGISTERED PATENT ATTORNEY

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Imaginative things in this magazine are a stimulus to the scientific mind. Who knows just what a power it is toward world progress? Our writers imagine the future, scientists make it come true!—Ed.

ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA

Sirs:

Thank you for sending me a copy of the "Green Man." I know Mr. Sherman and look forward eagerly to reading the story. . . . Who knows though but that one of these days one of your stories will materialize into facts the Britannica would wish to incorporate within its volumes. The damndest things have a way of coming true these days.

Dale O'Brien
Director of Public Relations
Encyclopedia Britannica
20 North Wacker Drive
Chicago 6, Illinois

You said it, Mr. O'Brien! Aren't they coming true, though? The slow is making AMAZING STORIES over into FACT STORIES. And we should say that AMAZING STORIES HAS been incorporated into the BRITANNICA, many times! Many of the things in the ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA were originally in AMAZING STORIES as fiction.—Ed.

WOULDN'T TAKE A WEEK'S SALARY

Sirs:

"The Green Man" is great. I wouldn't take a good week's salary for the pleasure I'm getting out of it. On page 112 now and I can't wait till the end to thank you for it.

Theodore Forbes
1705 Lauder Place
Washington, D. C.

Thanks, Mr. Forbes. Your editor likes to hear such kind words!—Ed.

CORRECTION

Sirs:

A small correction on footnote on page 120, Vol. 20, No. 7: Man began to take physical appearance over 5 million years ago, on this globe and in this humanity. Otherwise Green Man best story of last ten years.

Frederick G. Hebe
900 San Vicente Blvd.
Santa Monica, Calif.

You're entitled to your opinion, Fred. But it would be a tough job to prove it. Your editor prefers to believe, with Mr. Shaver, that it was much less. On the scale of evolution, we'd agree in general with your ideas. But speaking of "Men" as a reasoning creature—before that he might have as easily been a monkey. Or was he?—Ed.



SELLS 95 STORIES AND NOVELETES

"The introduction you gave me to your editor friend, resulting in my present assignment to do a complete round for this monthly, is doubly appreciated especially since I finished my M. I. A. training sometime ago, and, consequently, have no cash on your service. There is concrete evidence that interest in your scientific contents is steadily increasing. To date now, I have sold 95 stories and novelettes in 20 national magazines."—Dwight Jordan, P. O. Box 254, Princeton, New York.

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CORRECTION ON HALLEY'S COMET

Sirs:

Would appreciate it if you would run this correction in your next issue. After all! You were caught with your britches down also. After I sent my letter, I stopped to consider Halley's comet. I remember very well the 1910 appearance, and somewhere in the subconscious, I recall another phenomenon which was reported to be the second appearance of Halley's at the time. I should have checked on my statement, but didn't.

Leave it to a lighthouse keeper to haul me up. His letter was most amusing.

And let me compliment you on your own sense of humor. The October letter on the freak who never sees or hears anything is priceless. Just what AMAZING STORIES needs for an occasional belly laugh. It also proves your unbiased attitude.

And it's a pleasure to have a thing printed the way it's written. My experience with the daily papers has been that they delete a great deal.

Emma Martelli

1040 Leavenworth St.

San Francisco 9, Calif.

Yes, we noted the inconsistency when we printed the letter—but we prefer to have the corrections come from other than our blue pencil. Editors are accused of crime enough in this respect!—Ed.

IT WAS MARVELOUS!

Sirs:

I am a faithful reader of AMAZING STORIES, but in all my years of reading, never have I struck a story I liked better, that amazed me more than "The Green Man." It was marvelous.

I do like your Richard Shaver Mysteries and I guess your fans do, too. The letters they write are enough to stifle a person. The very idea. Is the fantasy reading public going ga-ga? I like a good fantasy novel, but to believe them is another thing.

Mrs. Cole Wright

6 Monument St.

Portland, Maine

P. S. Age 21 years, mother of five children. Amazing, isn't it?

Amazing isn't the word for it! Congratulations, Mrs. Wright. Your editor is one of those people who is ga-ga over kids. As for the Shaver stories, your attitude of skepticism is the correct one. You'll never be taken for a sucker that way. But don't be the other way either. We try to keep an open mind. As Shakespeare said "there are more things under the sun . . ."—Ed.

NUMAR "A CHARACTER"

Sirs:

My hat off to Harold M. Sherman. His fictional character Numar, as the Green Man, was great. He is what I call a "suspensumaltery"

writer. Let's have more from him. His humor, fact, fiction, thoughts and movements ran as sound in his story as any I hope to read in a long time. Never was an AMAZING STORIES novel so short.

Olin Mapes
3125 Brentwood Ave.
Jacksonville, Fla.

Sherman will be back! He's doing a new one now called "All Aboard For The Moon" which we predict will keep up the tremendous pace he has set. And then will come "The Green Man Returns" . . . but let's keep a few secrets! Anyway, you can be sure we've got some of the swiftest novels you've ever seen, by dozens of top writers, coming up. Don't miss an issue of AMAZING STORIES. Let "The Green Man" keep you reminded of that.—Ed.

EXPECTED SOMETHING WONDERFUL Sirs:

Until today I thought AMAZING STORIES was slipping, and when I picked up yesterday's copy of AS I expected to see something wonderful, and boy, did I! "The Green Man" was truly the best SF story I have ever read. It is fascinating, yet so real, instead of being a monster, the Green Man was like you and I (almost).

The thrill that I got out of the story was made up of two factors: 1) The "honest-to-goodness" reality. 2) Places and personages mentioned like La Canada, which I have visited many times, Chicago, New York, Los Angeles. All I can say is that the "Green Man" had everything beat for humor, fascination and reality.

Concerning the rocks that I thought AS was on, is that I thought R. Shaver's story "I Remember Lemuria" was swell, but don't you think let fiction be fiction and don't mix it with our daily lives. Even I begin to bear things and when I see caves I half expect to see little demons come out. That was bad enough, but when you print a letter from a dero (if there is such a thing) I think that is a little too much, don't you?

If you continue to publish stories like "The Green Man" your mag will be the best on the market. Tell writer Sherman that his story is destined to become a SF classic! And I don't need to look into a crystal ball either.

B. Rosen
10357 McVine
Sunland, Calif.

We can't be discriminating. If a "dero" writes us a letter, we print it. Personally, we think he's a fekir, too—but we know Mr. Shaver is not. If you do see little demons come out, we'd advise you to run, just in case. We know we would! —Ed.

GEOLOGISTS, ATTENTION

Sirs:

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Third—Sirius is one of the nearer stars and it is 8.4 light years away. I might add here that since light travels 186,000 miles a second, that one light year is 5.9 trillion miles, which means that Sirius is approximately 48,000,000,000,000 miles away.

Fourth—I quote "Science Illustrated," May 1946—"Our planetary system is about 180,000,000,000,000,000 (quadrillion) miles from our Milky Way's center.

Fifth—the nearest galaxy is from fifty to one hundred million light years distant, or about 450,000,000,000,000,000 (sextillion) miles away.

Yes, gentlemen, I think friend Numan came much farther than "A mere trillion miles or so."

Pat Lowrie (Age—15 yrs.)
456 S. Sherman St.
Denver, Colorado

Mr. Sherman said he came "straight through" the Milky Way, not from beyond it. So any figure he might name, would be correct, considering the extent of the Milky Way. However, thank you for all those figures. They go to prove we aren't as big shots on Earth as we'd like to think. Maybe your own letter will help to impress the importance of a "Nunar" on our readers. Nunar, to our way of thinking, is a very real person, and we expect some day to hear more of him!—Ed.

ON STATIC

Sirs:

It is beyond my comprehension why you printed the article "Static Was Licked Twenty Years Ago" in your October issue of AMAZING STORIES. The title is very humorous to anyone knowing anything about radio.

A lightning flash is not, of course, "of direct current nature." Any electrical discharge through air or a vacuum is an oscillatory discharge. If lightning were a direct current discharge, there would be no need to eliminate static caused by it since there could be no static. The very fact that lightning does interfere with your radio is proof enough that it is similar to a radio wave. Actually, lightning is just another spark, that is to say, a high-frequency oscillatory discharge. It differs from a radio wave only that it has no regular frequency. If a pure sine sound wave is compared to a pure sine radio wave that is a fair comparison, then static would be a "noise" or what you hear when a door is slammed. Both noise and static are composed of irregular waves which cover a broad range of frequencies.

Since Mr. Hefferlin seems to have found a direct-current in the primary of his antenna coil, he has when the best engineers of the United States, nay, of the world, have thought was an impossibility, a direct-current transformer! Only an alternating current can induce an electric current in a wire.

I heartily suggest that Mr. Hefferlin buy a good book on radio and electricity and learn a little

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about the subject before he writes any more articles.

Incidentally, it wouldn't hurt the editors of AMAZING STORIES to do the same thing.

Forgive me for being insulting, but I honestly cannot see how anyone with a high school education could read Mr. Hefferlin's article without laughing, not with him, but at him.

Incidentally, a good article on the problem of static could be very interesting. Major Armstrong's FM radio is the closest approach to "solving the problem," but, believe me, it is far from solved.

Franklin R. Williams,
748 Glenview Road
Glendale 2, California

This guy Hefferlin seems to be taking a beating! How about it, you readers? Anybody happen to build the static machine he mentions? As for the editors reading science books, how many do you think we'd have to read to be an "authority" on everything AMAZING STORIES might touch upon? So why should we pick on one small segment of an "impossibility." We have hundreds of thousands of readers like yourself who do an excellent job of picking out "errors" in our fantastic articles. We achieve what we aim to achieve, to make people think, and to create discussion.—Ed.

BEEN EVERYWHERE

Sirs:

I have just finished reading the October issue of AMAZING STORIES. "The Green Man" is the best story I have ever read. The only thing wrong is the ending. It should have actually happened instead of just being dreamed.

I'm going to be frank with you about the other stories. Every one of them stinks through and through.

And this stuff in the discussion department about dero (whatever the hell that is) is the most foolish thing I ever heard of. And I'm one guy that knows about things like that.

I know you'll wonder just who I am to know that. Well, I'll tell you. My name is Edgar White. My home is in Denver, Colorado. I'm a doctor, explorer, football player, adventurer, singer, writer (no stories sold yet,) engineer, scientist, and Christian. I've been everywhere and done practically everything. I ran away from home when I was fourteen and have been wandering around ever since. I've been down to South America and through more jungle than most explorers ever heard of. I've seen savages of every type. I barely escaped the headhunters with my party at one time.

Then I came back to America and went to high school on my own in Denver. My folks live on the other side of Colorado. There I worked my way through school and became all the things I am. But the most wonderful thing was becoming a Christian, but it's useless to tell you fellows about that.

Since graduating from college, I've been wandering around all over the nation making friends and using all my practices above to make a living. Every time I come to a town I like, I stay there a few weeks. Right now I'm in Tonkawa, Oklahoma, the strangest little town in the world. I must say I like it better than any place I've ever been.

Now I'm in a friend's shop here. This friend is an amateur writer and the best fellow I've ever seen. There isn't anything in this world he wouldn't do for a good friend. I hate to leave him, which I have to do in a few days. But I can't stay in my friend's place any longer. I've got it in my blood to wander around seeking new adventures. I'll head for Central America next. I've got to have adventure, and that seems to be a good place.

But back to this dero stuff about Mount Shasta. It's all crazy. There's not a world of truth in it. Somebody is just trying to make a lot of money.

Edgar White
Tonkawa, Okla.

You certainly seem to have been around, and at a very early age, too. About Mt. Shasta, do you speak from experience? You're sure about the mountain? We'd like to have the details.—Ed.

IN THE FRONT DOOR

Sirs:

Amazing Stories are truly amazing. I never miss one—have just finished October issue. "Green Man" is refreshing diversion. It brings fantasy in the front door and out the back—1946. Much of the dialogue is classic. But how the Green Man could have misjudged distance is a mystery. My information is that the distance in miles to the Milky Way is fifty, plus fifteen zeros.

And M-M-M-M-M-M is a clever tale. But the author takes us ahead to 9146, about one third way through the age of Scorpio, which to a student of cyclic evolution will be a sullen age. Perhaps as cruel and cold blooded as the Picean age just passed. And his throwback of 8000 years takes 1946 slang and emotions back to 1146, to the close of the dark ages.

Even more amazing is Emma Martinelli's report, "I Have Seen Halley's Comet Twice." That tramp of the universe circled the sun in 1815, again in 1910 and will give us a command performance again in 1985. The lady may have seen it coming and going.

Yes AMAZING STORIES are truly amazing.

Lyman Yost
Triadelphia, W. Va.

Actually the distance TO the Milky Way is no miles at all. We are IN the Milky Way, being a part of it—the Island Universe of which we are a part is the Milky Way, seen from an "end-on" viewpoint, we being on the outer edge of a universe shaped roughly like a very thin watch. As for

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prophecy, we don't like to take these long-range zodiacal things too literally. As in a correction letter in this department, you will have noted Mrs. Martineau admits she made a mistake.—Ed.

MORE DELICIOUS THAN CHOCOLATE

Sirs:

I have never written a fan letter before, but I'm going to now, 'cause I am at last reading a story that is more delicious than hot chocolate!

I just had to stop in the middle of "The Green Man" to let you guys know what a masterpiece you have! Gosh, there's a chuckle on every page!

I was real sleepy last night, but thought I'd see what AMAZING STORIES had for me to read. So—I picked it up, read it, and—Morpheus left me!

I'm writing this at 3:15 in the morning.

Well, I'll sign off now to join "The Green Man."

Gosh!!!

Virginia Nardi
62 W. Huron St.
Chicago, Illinois

Gosh!—Ed.

OUR APOLOGIES

Sirs:

I have had brought to my attention a story in the August 1946 issue of AMAZING STORIES. On page 37, second paragraph, a reference is made to the Rosicrucians which is far from complimentary. It is obvious from the reference that it would make the Rosicrucians appear to be some kind of a cult that certainly had far from idealistic purposes in their activities.

It is my opinion that the author of this article had no intention of, in any way, trying to create a wrong impression of the Rosicrucian Order. However, in view of the fact that the Rosicrucian Order could be interpreted as perpetuating the same type of personages or ideas that the story would indicate, and in view of the fact that we are an advertiser in your publications, do you not think that it would be fair to insert a notation in a future issue of AMAZING STORIES stating that the reference made in that story was entirely fictional on the part of the author?

We and our members who are readers of your various publications would sincerely appreciate such a fair attitude on your part concerning this reference. I will appreciate any consideration you give to my suggestion.

Cecil A. Poole,
Supreme Secretary,
The Rosicrucian Order,
San Jose, California.

Of course the reference to a Rosicrucian priest in the story was fictional. Ordinary proofreading should have detected the name and replaced it with a purely fictional one. We regret that the reference appeared and we apologize for any erroneous impression the story conveyed. We have received word from Mr. Poole that he will submit an article to us outlining the true history

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highway back into the country west of Hopland and returning to it again some miles further north. the countryside is mountainous, or I should say, hilly. Mostly rocky with a thin layer of soil. Poor farming land, good for pasture, perhaps. Now scorched and parched. A few ranches are scattered in this vicinity, some not occupied though they are in use and good condition. Have learned they work them but will not live on them. Seems to be a goat ranch or two here. Became friendly with one of the men who has goats and who is often in the hills. He gave me a good lowdown. Also have some photographs. Can not be used for proof. This is something which I cannot grapple with, nor comprehend. Causes me to feel weak and jittery and helpless.

Have torn up half the brush along the roadside to some distance looking for ventriloquists and hoax makers to no effect. Yes, there are voices, mostly in a strange foreign tongue. The voices sounded and after much effort believe they came from above a person in the atmosphere.

My car, for no reason would stop running for awhile and then for no reason it would start again.

It is very true that something or somebody does not want settlers in this area—also very true there are strange phenomena. Guns are ineffective. Have fired at the voices.

C. C. C.
% L. J. Key
P. O. Box 52
Burke, Idaho

This sounds very interesting. Apparently we have here a confirmation of weird goings on in Mendocino County. Any more of your readers want to take a crack at exploring there?—Ed.

HE SAYS NO

Sirs:

Some time ago I became interested in the story of Mr. Johns of San Francisco. Since then I have investigated thoroughly all the angles of this somewhat distorted tale. After some months of careful investigation, these facts remain: 1) There is no cave, in or near the location Mr. John gives. 2) There is no phenomena existent in the Clear Lake region. Neither natural or unnatural. 3) The photographs I have of the place are just mere pictures. 4) I challenge any of the supporters of Mr. John (Namely Mr. Hehr, V. G., John Preve, Jr.), or any one else to show me.

Frank N. Grubb
920 16th St.
Oakland, Calif.

Certainly the CHMBS (Cave Hunters Mutual Benefit Society) is functioning. Until we are handed actual proof, we'll string along with Mr. Grubb. But maybe here is proof, in the following letter? It comes from Mr. Poole, of the Roanoke Order. It is an excerpt from the "Roanoke Digest" and is marked to our attention.

—Ed.

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South to due North. Too fast to be an aeroplane, unlighted yet visible, but NOT GLOWING AS A METEOR WOULD. The object went over the first time exactly overhead. About fifteen minutes later it passed over again in the same direction at the same speed and altitude but above five degrees west of the zenith. Assuming that the object encircled the Earth, its course was laid substantially close to the 180th meridian. I remember reports of a comet and why would a comet go around twice? Perhaps some of our other readers can clarify this.

2. For all my life I've felt the band of destiny around me. I clearly remember things that happened when I was an infant in my mother's arms. I remember moving to and living in a house next door to the lot on which my father, a contractor, built his home. I remember watching my father direct the building of that home into which we moved in the Spring of 1922. I WAS BORN JANUARY 27, 1921.

3. I've been protected. As pilot of a B-17 I completed thirty missions over Germany before D-Day in nineteen forty-four. On one particular incident, we were being fired upon by a five gun FLAK battery north of Amsterdam. Three shells burst before us, each evenly spaced but closer. The fourth shell never appeared, but the fifth shell exploded just as far behind us as the third before us. That fourth shell should have been planted right inside my Bomb-bays, but something happened to it. I've had the weather at my back clear up without reason when I anticipated a "blind" landing, and sock in solid before I could get out of the plane after parking it. One night my navigator got lost. Looking back we plotted our course to find that we had flown through the London Barrage Balloon defenses at 400 feet altitude. By certain radio signals, we knew we were in a barrage balloon area, but we never saw one. I was leading a formation, and all other navigators concur in our course. The British say they didn't move the balloons for us.

4. I've been taught from above. I didn't finish High School because they wouldn't teach me the things I wanted to know.

Larry S. Hatfield

Box 401

Florence, S. C.

What was it H. G. Wells said?—En.

ROCKET SHIP?

Sirs:

When about nine or ten and abed with a mild case of the measles, I had at least one dream concerning a trip through a tunnel of some ten or twenty miles length, perfectly circular, smooth, and large in diameter. After a few hundred feet of travel, the apparatus which conveyed me (it was not an automobile or train) was subjected to an odd force field of some sort and apparently traveled upside-down or in some other odd fashion within the tube.

An amazing familiarity which has struck me upon entering certain urban and rural localities in the Northeast, when a most comprehensive survey of my travels from earlier years cannot reveal my having been anywhere near there.

When hiking during my eighteenth year with another companion through the Pocono ranges of Pennsylvania, we stumbled upon a most interesting object in a thicket while attempting a short-cut through a valley to avoid extra walking distances. It was overgrown with ground pine, bushes, etc., so that it must have lain in the ground for ten to fifteen years.

It was about fifteen feet long, cylindrical, and smooth save for heavy quartzlike panes in what I presume was the bow. The panes, however, were flush with the streamline outer structure, curving with it. It lacked any traces of wings or landing gear.

I managed to open the partially ajar door (buried in its lower edge three inches or so into the marshy earth) but could see little in the gloom of the interior (about seven feet in diameter, by the way.) I could get my head within, but had to withdraw it from the stench of mold, swampy water, etc., of its moist interior.

If it be a rocket-ship (I can think of no other words to employ) it differs from Mr. "V. G.'s" observation in San Francisco Bay. It was not heavy, but light, or at least that was the impression obtained from my handling of the door. It was at most as heavy as aluminum, but more durable, more resistant to wear. The impact that buried it in the soil had not dented the apparently monocoque type fuselage. There were no seams or rivets visible, as I recall. The metallic lustre I simply cannot explain. I have heard that there are alloys of gold and iron which have a bluish tinge, but there exists no other analogy to its coloration.

The object was surrounded by saplings or recent growth, but I think I recall a dead, completely uprooted tree somewhat to the stern, with its top snapped of somewhat cleanly. The locale is West by a little south of Milford, Penn. I intend to revisit the thing this fall, perhaps just after a Labor Day Holiday, and would be glad to take any interested people with a little hiking ability to the exact spot.

I enclose a sketch. Note the lack of tail fins, rudders, etc. I believe captured German V-2 rockets have been controlled by inside vanes in the rocket motors, the outside fins being of less value in control.

Thomas Andrews
Hotel Pierre,
5th Ave. & 60th St.
New York, N. Y.

Here's another "space ship" for our Pennsylvania readers to investigate. We ought surely to investigate this, and prove to our complete satisfaction what it was that Mr. Andrews saw. If you can old us in any way, Mr. Andrews, we would appreciate it very much.—Ed.

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Charles Atlas

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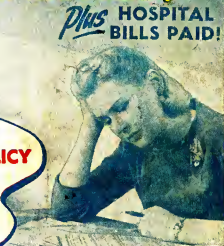
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